THE GREAT DUTY OF CONFORMITY.

Plainly Illustrated in the EXAMPLE

Of a Young Man, who was first drawn to the *Presbyterians*, and afterwards to the *Independent-Perswasion*, but now from a deep sence of that his Sin, returned to the

CHURCH of ENGLAND.

Giving a particular Account of the Reasons whereby he was convinced of his Error in Separating; And a Modest Refutation of the Common Objections which are urged against CONFORMITY.

Written by himself for his own and the Churches Vindication.

Wherefore Ye must needs be subject, not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake, Rom. 13. 5.

LONDON,
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Hyo. Jones

XUN

To the Truly Honourable Sir *Stephen Fox*, Knight; one of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesties Treasury.

Honoured Sir,

THE Contemplation of your Heroick Virtues, hath emboldned me to make this Dedication to your Honour, whose manifest Loyalty to the King, and Love to the Church, do abundantly express themselves in your Noble and Virtuous Actions, which, like so many Heralds, Proclaim the same; Besides those particular Favours I my self have received at your bountiful Hands, which should I not remember, and acknowledge to your Worthy Praise; I should be of all men the most ungrateful. This poor Mite (unworthy of your Honours view) I presume to lay at your Feet, that it may draw a Lustre from your Excellence to en-

lighten the minds of such who are filled with Prejudices against the Church.

The God of Heaven, who hath hitherto miraculously preserved (and I trust will evermore) our Most Gracious Sovereign, and this Church from the Plots of all their Enemies; Bless your Honour, your Vertuous Lady, and all your Family, not only with the Riches of this World, but of that which endures to all Eternity; which is the uncessant Prayer of

Your Honours most Humble
and Devoted Servant,

John Jones.

An

An Epistle to my Brethren the Dissenters, especially those of Mr. Lobb's *Congregation.*

Brethren.

LET it not seem strange to any of you, that I have changed my Opinion, and am turned to the Communion of the Church of *England*, you may possibly conceive many things to be the occasion thereof, in your private Meditations; and may express your apprehensions to each other, when you meet together; and yet deceive your selves and wrong me also, as I understand you have done, but to satisfie you in the truth of the matter, be pleased to read the following Discourse, and you will there find the true Reasons of it, even substantial Truths, tho' represented but in a plain down-right manner, and very

homely dreſs, (according to the meaneſs of the Author) yet with great ſincerity, and an ardent deſire of your welfare. It is the fruit of thoſe ſpare Hours that God hath afforded me in the Employment which I follow, and which I have writ to diſcharge my Conſcience towards you all; though it may be ſome may eſteem it otherwiſe, yet God knows it is really ſo, and I pray God it may be for the good of many to make them look about them, and ſee how far they are ſhort of a true Goſpel Obedience: I am perſwaded in my heart that many of you are ſo conſcientious that you dare not wittingly commit the leaſt evil for the greateſt good in the World; therefore have a care; you know God requires Univerſal Obedience, and ſee that you render it unto him. Truſt no Man, tho' he pretend to never ſo much Sincerity and Sanctity, unleſs he Preach this Doctrine,

ſtrine, *and put you in mind to be ſubject to Principalities, to obey Magiſtrates*, &c. This is according to the pure Word of God; and the charge given to the Miniſters of the Goſpel. Be not deceived with fair Speeches and an outward ſhew of Holineſs, for the Scripture ſaith *ſuch ſhall come into the World, and deceive many*; the very *Elect* ſhall not wholly eſcape them; and how do you know but that you are theſe Perſons ſpoken of? Remember you have warning to look to your ſelves; and ſee upon what ground you ſtand, if you take it not you may repent when it is too late: 'tis not good to be too confident. In the Book you will find a true Account of all Gods dealings with me (that are material) even from my Childhood, in order to his bringing me to the knowledge of himſelf: how I came to be of the *Presbyterian Party*; and how I came to leave them to be

of

of the *Independent Judgment*, and alſo the Temptations I met withal from the *Papiſts* : But chiefly the Reaſons why I have forſaken all to Conform to the *Church of England* ; there you have alſo my Apprehenſions concerning all the chiefeſt Objections uſed againſt me in Conforming ; and pardon me if any thing ſeem harſh ; for I muſt ſpeak my mind ; eſpecially when I conſider that the good of your Souls lies at Stake. I cannot but warn you to avoid the ſame danger ; that I (through Mercy) have been lately delivered from. If I am really in an Errour, I am ſorry for it, and am eaſie to be convinc'd with good reaſon, and ſound Arguments.

The Holy Scriptures is my Counſellour, which plainly convinces me that Conformity is a great Duty ; and fully to Illuſtrate the ſame, is my deſign in this Publication. The Lord grant it may prove convincing

to

to you all, and engage you to the diſcharge of ſo great and neceſſary a Duty, which is the Prayer of

January the 11, 168½.

Your Friend and Brother to ſerve you,

J. Jones.

To

TO THE
READER:

Courteous Reader,

HEre is *presented to thy View, an Example of one duely sensible of the Great Necessity of Conforming to the* Church of England. *What he hath been, and what he is, the Book it self will inform thee. Read it; not so much to Carp at, or to Joake upon any thing in it; as to Profit thy self thereby. Examples are fine Lessons from whence may easily be learn'd Good or Evil, according to the nature of them; If thou Judge this a good Example, and worthy*

worthy thy Imitation, as I truſt thou wilt have cauſe) then follow it: and approve thy ſelf to be a real Chriſtian, by Fearing God, and by Honouring the King; He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. *The* Church of England *doth preſs Holineſs as much as any in the World*, without which none can be Saved; *therefore if thou love thy Soul, ſtick faſt unto Her, leaſt thou fall into* Errour, *and* Schiſme, *and the Snare of the* Devil. *If thou art already drawn aſide, by thy Education, or through Profit, or the alluring Enticements of any of thy Friends or Acquaintance; then ſpeedily return; and let this Example quicken thy Diligence: In doing of which thou wilt bring much Glory to God, much Comfort and Benefit to thy ſelf, and the Church of God.*

And

To the Reader.

And to Conclude, (whether thou take this Advice or not) ſee thou be Charitable in all thy Cenſures ; and ſo

Farewel.

THE

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The

THE GREAT DUTY OF CONFORMITY.

An Introduction, Containing the Reaſons of undertaking this Vindication.

IT pleaſed Almighty God in the beginning, to Create Mankind after his own Heavenly Image, and made him Lord of this lower Creation; giving him Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea, and over the Fowles of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the face of the Earth; and in a capacity of enjoying ſweet and intimate Communion with God: who made a Covenant with our firſt Parents, and us in him of advancing us to the greateſt Happineſs our Natures were capable of, upon condition of our Obedience, which we were then perfectly capable of rendring to his Divine Majeſty: But by our Diſobedience in the Fall of our firſt Parents, we became obnoxious to the greateſt of Miſeries; and had as little hopes of recovering Happineſs, as the Angels that ſinned

before us; who are reſerved in chaines of Darkneſs to the Judgment of the Great Day.

Our Miſery being thus deplorable, God of his infinite Compaſſions, *unwilling that all ſhould periſh*, contrived a way for our recovery, and graciouſly condeſcended to make a promiſe of his Son, *to ſave all thoſe that truly repent them of all their ſins, that firmly believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all their hearts; and that ſincerely labour to keep his commandements all the dayes of their lives.*

Yet conſidering that (notwithſtanding God calls upon miſerable ſinners with the greateſt love and importunity, to perform theſe gracious and reaſonable terms of their Salvation) ſinners will remain ſinners ſtill; impenitent, unbelieving and diſobedient to the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

And conſidering further, that thoſe who are Regenerate, and have in ſome meaſure (by the Grace of God given them) performed theſe conditions of their Salvation: Yet by reaſon of ſome original Corruption, ſuch as St. *Paul* expreſſes in *Rom. 7. When I would do good evil is preſent with me; and the good which I would do that I cannot, but the evil I would not do, that do I.* I ſay, ſince ſomething of Fleſh remaineth in the beſt of Chriſtians, it is no wonder, that as the effect thereof, do ariſe diverſity of opinions amongſt them, who notwithſtanding agree about the means of Salvation.

Yet theſe diverſity of Opinions about leſſer matters in Religion, create moſt lamentable diviſions, which through the craft and malice of the Devil, are fomented and encreaſed in order to the deſtroying the whole of Religion.

And

And in a Nation where there are ſuch diverſity of opinions, (every party endeavouring to repreſent their own the beſt) it is a hard matter for a ſincere Soul (that is made duely ſenſible of the neceſſity of minding Religion, and the ſaving of his ſoul) to make a ſafe choice.

For ſuch is the malicious Policy of Satan, that when he cannot keep perſons under the power and dominion of Sin; yet he will do them all the miſchief he can; and if he cannot keep them from a ſerious, godly courſe of life, yet he will endeavour to draw them into Errour; and under a repreſentation of the greateſt purity and Goſpel Order, doth enſnare them into diſobedience, and diſorder.

As for my part, after mature conſideration, and earneſt requeſt to God, and a zealous profeſſion of the opinions of Diſſenters; I find it moſt agreeable both to Scripture, and Reaſon, to cleave unto the Church of *England* as it is by Law Eſtabliſht.

My heart is grieved, and I am ſorely afflicted, to ſee the generality of my diſſenting Brethren, ſo much out of love with the *good old way of the Church of* England, that hath led millions to Heaven: *that ſafe, that pure and moſt refined way*, that hath not by refining eclipſed the luſtre of Chriſtianity.

A little dirt they ſee in the way makes them run into the Briars, where they are ſorely entangled, and can't diſcern the footſteps by which the Flock doth go, both ſafe, and clean.

Such apprehenſions they have, that all who go that way are certainly defiled; becauſe they ſee ſome fall into the Mire for want of care and dili-

gence to mind the way: Wherefore they are affrighted and fly, and thinking to keep their garments clean, they themſelves become ſtrangly polluted, and if any by diſcerning the footſteps of the Flock, endeavour to get out, they are immediately ſuppoſed to run through a puddle of iniquity.

Elſe, what is the reaſon that ſo many do ſuppoſe, becauſe I have left the Diſſenters, to go in the way of the Church of *England*; that I am gone out of light, into a great degree of darkneſs; from the profeſſion of Religion, toward Apoſtacy; from the pure way of ſeparation to the corruptions and pollutions of the Church of *England*? This many have upbraided me with, not diſcerning their moſt groſs miſtake.

I wiſh all Diſſenters may defile their garments no worſe in the way they have choſen, than the ſerious Proteſtants in the *good way of the Church*; but the contrary is moſt evident.

I am deeply ſenſible of the great ſcandal that is caſt upon this Church, and the Members thereof, by Chriſtians of other perſwaſions; and am therefore compell'd to bring in my teſtimony to juſtifie her, as well as vindicate my ſelf: And *I* am induced to do it chiefly for theſe Reaſons.

Firſt, Becauſe *I* would (as God ſhall enable me) repreſent the ſafety, as well as the excellency of the way of the Church of *England*; and thereby take off the odium which my brethren have caſt upon her.

Secondly, Becauſe, as while *I* had an averſion to the Church, *I* took all opportunities of repreſenting her ways unſafe, and unſound, and of

of drawing perſons off from her communion: ſo now (by the grace of God) I will labour to undeceive thoſe whom formerly I deceived; and to encourage all thoſe whom I find diſpoſed to be religious to ſtick faſt to that *form of ſound words*, (which is taught, and practiſed in the Church of *England*,) *in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus*; and that others may ſee the unreaſonableneſs of ſuch practices as well as I.

Thirdly, I am greatly induced to this work, becauſe I am become a univerſal talk, among diſſenting Brethren, and Siſters: As being a perſon who have made a long profeſſion of the Goſpel, according to the order and inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt; But am now by marrying a Wife of the Church of *England*, fall'n away to the diſhonour of the Goſpel, as well as my own deſtruction; Hardening themſelves in the way of Separation by my Example; wherefore I think it highly expedient to convince them of their dangerous miſtake in this particular. And that

Fourthly, A great ſence of Duty obligeth me to make this ſolemn, but ſincere Vindication of my ſelf: becauſe there are many who if they were rightly inform'd in their Judgments, would ſee the neceſſity of conforming as well as I; and the greatneſs of the Duty.

For in the caſe of ſeparation, *it is not enough to fear that the terms of Church-communion are ſinful terms, but it muſt be made appear by the word of God wherein they are ſo*; and where this can't ſufficiently be made out, there is an abſolute neceſſity of Conforming.

For it is an indiſpenſible duty agreed upon by all Parties, that we ought to hold communion

with the eſtabliſh'd Church of *England*, unleſs ſhe did impoſe ſuch terms of communion, that by Scripture can be proved ſinful, which ſhe doth not; as I will endeavour to make appear in the proof.

The miſtake that the moſt of Diſſenters lye under in this reſpect, enduceth me to diſcover to them the way by which God was pleaſed to enlighten me.

Fifthly, If *I* ſhould neglect this work, many inconveniencies would follow thereupon. As,

1. Diſſenters would triumph againſt the beſt conſtituted Church in the world (I mean the Church of *England*) and ſay, that perſons of other perſwaſions never cleave to her communion, but that thereby they may have greater liberty to ſin; and lead a more looſe and careleſs life, with reſpect to Religion; and that Conſcience, and a ſence of duty can never do it.

2. If *I* did not undertake ſuch a work as this; it might go for granted that *I* was become an Apoſtate, or one that had a temporary faith only; and in proceſs of time fell from Chriſt and became fruitleſs for ever. And

3. Beholding my Fall, as ſuch; will be more abundantly confirm'd in the ways of ſeparation: and by all the Arguments they can find, will ſtrengthen themſelves in their manifeſt errour and miſtake.

Moſt holy Lord God, Father of all Mercies, look down from heaven upon thy poor ſervant; and be graciouſly pleaſed to aid and aſſiſt me in this my undertaking, let it redound to thine honour and glory; and to the conviction of thoſe that ſeparate; give me clear appre-

apprehenſions of the greatneſs of that ſin, and the oppoſite duty; that I may expreſs with plainneſs my ſence thereof, as I ſhall receive light from thy ſacred word. O let thy Spirit help all my infirmities: making me capable of ſerving thy moſt holy Majeſty herein, and the Church which thou haſt planted amongſt us. O that thou wouldſt bleſs her indeed, with a moſt painful, learned and pious Clergy, and a moſt holy people, bleſſed be thy name that we have any ſuch eſpecially ſo many. O encreaſe her more abundantlie, and add daylie to her ſuch as ſhall be ſaved, and let thy poor worm grow up in her, till he become a perfect man in Chriſt, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be all glory for ever, Amen.

A Brief Account of ſeveral things further neceſſary to be known, in Order to a Right Underſtanding the following Diſcourſe.

I Greatly admire at the Free Grace of God towards me, whoſe love is marvelous and aſtoniſhing, ſuch as cannot be fathomed, for being in the hands of God, *as the clay is in the hand of the potter*, he might have made me the vileſt of all his Creatures even the moſt loathſom and venemous.

But ſuch is his great favour, and kindneſs, that he hath made me a man, and not a Beaſt; a Chriſtian, and not an Infidel; *the lines are fall'n to me in pleaſant places.*

Gods ſuperlative goodneſs hath glorioufly appeared not only in that *I* was born in this *Engliſh Goſhen*, where the true light of the Goſpel (*which bringeth Salvation to all men*) hath marvellouſly ſhone forth, but alſo in that *I* was born of Chriſtian Parents, in whom appeared the power of Godlineſs; who took care to *bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Theſe are ſuch amazing inſtances of Gods peculiar love and good-will; that *I* cannot but be filled with admiration under the lively apprehenſions of them.

O praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, Bleſs his Holy Name.

I was born, in the year of our Lord God, one thouſand ſix hundred fifty ſeven.

My Father was a true Loyal *Britain* of *Merrionith-ſhire*, and a Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt.

When the King came in, he was ſent for out of *Shropſhire*, (where he had lived a conſiderable time) into *Monmouthſhire*, to perform his office as an *Ambaſſador of Jeſus Chriſt*: But things not anſwering his expectation there, after one year, went into *Glamorganſhire*, where he enjoyed a Benefice of threeſcore pounds a year, three years together; and then ended a Holy Life, *Dying in the Lord.*

I was but nine years old when he dyed; but the influence of a good Education, which I received originally from him, and afterwards from my Mother, reſtrained me from any groſs acts of impiety; till God by his Spirit did more effectually convince me of *Sin* and *righteouſneſs.*

Had my Father lived, I had been made a Scholar; but his early departure, before I came to maturity, did greatly obſtruct the ſame.

My Mothers keeping me in aw, and inſtructing me in my Duty, towards God, and towards Man; was a great means God made uſe of, to engage me to lead a ſober life and converſation: in which ſence I may ſay, *I have feared God from my Youth.*

When *I* was near ſixteen years of age, my Mother ſent me to *London* to be an Apprentice; God ſtirring up the heart of a Worthy Knight and his Lady to aſſiſt her therein.

During the time of my Apprentiſhip, God was pleaſed to open my heart as he did the heart of *Lydia*, and revealed unto me the *things that belong*

to

to my eternal peace; he cauſed me to ſee the evil nature that is in ſin, the neceſſity of getting an intereſt in Chriſt, and leading a holy life.

The inſtruments that God made uſe of in this work, were *Presbyterian Miniſters*, ſuch who (notwithſtanding the utmoſt extent of Charity) *I* muſt acknowledge were very wicked men; and they were theſe two, Mr. *Dod*, and Mr. *Farrendine*.

I cannot be poſitive whether Mr. *Dod* were Presbyterian or *I*ndependent; only that he preached for Mr. *Farrendine* in the old Play-houſe; neither doth it matter much ſince it has been too apparent that they were brethren in iniquity as ſome in Mr. *Lobbs* Congregation can atteſt.

Yet nevertheleſs Mr. *Dod* preaching about the *barren Fig-tree*, where 'tis ſaid, *cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground*; and the interceſſion for it; *Lord ſpare it one year longer, and I will dig about it, and dung it*; *and if it bring not forth fruit then, cut it down*.

The diſcourſe which he made on this text had a greater influence on me to become ſtrict in Religion; and to mind the concerns of another life, then any thing ever had before.

Then *I* reckon God begun to work a ſaving change upon my heart; and made Mr. *Farrendine* inſtrumental of promoting and encreaſing it.

I have alſo been edified by many others, among whom *I* had my converſation for ſeveral years, whoſe notions all the while *I* ſuckt in, together with Religion. And

☞ (The Lord humble me for it) *I* have often (both alone, and in publick) pray'd for the overthrow

throw and deſtruction of the Church, and Prelates thereof, as well as Popery.

Which prayers are certainly an *abomination in the ſight of God*; and of which ſort there are not a few.

*I*t was long before God was pleaſed to give me a ſight of my errour and miſtake: But God (who worketh all things together for good, to thoſe that love him, and unfeignedly ſeek unto him; to be guided into the way of all truth) did in his own due time, hear my prayers, and open my eyes, that *I* might ſee my folly; *and turn my feet into the way of his teſtimonies.*

*I*t was by little and little that God did diſcover to me the excellency of the conſtitution, of the Church of *England*; which enduced me now, and then, to hear ſome of her teachers, and to converſe with prudent men that were of her perſwaſion.

At which time *I* was obſerved not to be ſo conſtant, and diligent in attending Mr. *Lobbs* Miniſtry as before; which gave occaſion of ſuſpition, to my brethren, to think, *I* had loſt my firſt love, and zeal for Religion; And that the cares of this world, or ſome other temptation; had put a ſtop to my hopeful procedure in the ſervice of God.

Having the principles of ſeparation diſtill'd into my mind together with Regeneration, it became the more difficult to purge them out.

The firſt thing that took effect, was the conſideration of the *Oath* which I took at receiving my Freedom. I conſidered it was an *Oath* which no Diſſenters (excepting *Quakers*) refuſe to take; which made me not to ſcruple it.

But

But afterwards hearing Mr. *Lobb* Preach againſt the breach of Promiſſory Oaths, ſhewing the hainouſneſs of the Sin; made me reflect upon what *I* had done; and examine how far *I* had performed the conditions it required.

And having examined the matter, *I* feared greatly, that it did prohibit the frequenting all religious aſſemblies that met together contrary to the will and pleaſure of our *Sovereign Lord the King*; *whoſe peace I had there promiſed to keep in my own perſon*; *and to let, or hinder to my power, whatever tends to the diſturbance thereof*: But theſe things I could not reconcile in my mind to my practice in diſſenting.

2. After this *I* did earneſtly implore the God of Heaven, to direct me into the *way of Truth*: But did keep all theſe things in my own breaſt, from any of my Brethren.

Which had *I* not done, *I* believe my convictions, had been nipt in the bud when they were tender and weak: but it pleaſed God that ſo *I* did from time to time, till they came to ſome maturity.

I ſtill kept correſpondence with my Brethren; but frequently took opportunities of going to Church.

And upon a certain day it pleaſed God *I* had a great deſire to hear the Biſhop of *London* Preach, and went to *Shoreditch* Church with a friend for that purpoſe; where the good Biſhop (after Sermon was ended) did confirm many.

And *I* beholding him, being poſſeſt with a ſtrong belief, that his prayers, with the whole Congregations; were mighty prevalent with God, for obtaining the deſired bleſſing: and find-

finding it an Ordinance of Jeſus Chriſt, which ought to follow Baptiſme (according to that in *Heb.* 6. 2.) *I* became exceeding deſirous of it; expreſſing the ſame to the Biſhop, who condeſcended thereunto.

This Confirmation had a great influence upon me, as well to quicken my diligence in the ſervice of God, as to encreaſe my love to the Church of *England*.

3. Some conſiderable time after this, *I* came to be acquainted with a virtuous maid (who was a Miniſters Daughter in the Country) and a good Chriſtian, as well as ſtrict Church-woman; towards whom *I* found my affections very flexible.

And though *I* was not perfectly of the Judgment of the Church of *England*, yet *I* did believe that a ſmall difference in opinion, was not ſufficient to ſeparate thoſe that were united in affection; eſpecially conſidering, there is ſcarce two men on earth, of one mind in all things.

This *I* concealed likewiſe from Mr. *Lobb*, and the reſt of my brethren, excepting two perſons: (who did approve of my procedure therein and kept my counſel) becauſe *I* concluded all the reſt would perfectly diſlike it.

A little before *I* was married, *I* went to tell Mr. *Lobb* what I had done, but it was after all was concluded between us. He being not at home *I* told his Wife what *I* came about, who ſeemed very much diſpleaſed at it, and thought ſhe would be a means to draw me away to the Church of *England*; to whom *I* reply'd, *I* thought not ſo, being perſwaded that it muſt be ſtronger Reaſons than uſually women are furniſhed withall, that

that must have so powerful an effect:

But I did not intimate in the least that I had any greater kindness for the Church of *England* than I had formerly; neither did I speak against it; for at that time *I* had (in some things) an aversion to hold communion with her.

After *I* was married *I* quickly went down into the Countrey to my Wives Friends; whose Father being a very learned, pious, and discreet Clergy-man; did give me very satisfying answers to most of my objections.

Yet when *I* came to *London* to converse among my brethren; *I* knew not how, to express my resolution of departing from them; nor of defending my self from them the censures *I* incurr'd: but my seldom coming among them gave them a strong suspition of what *I* was about.

At length *I* took up a resolution of going to Mr. *Lobb* to give him the reasons of my absenting which *I* did; but doing it very imperfectly, being over-power'd with an excellent Scholar and cunning disputant: I thought it requisite afterward to give him my reasons in writing; in which paper were some things misapplyed, as though *I* did accuse them all, of being *Rebels* and *Traitors*, and *I* know not what, which news was presently reported all over the City, among the dissenters: insomuch that *I* heard of it by my acquaintance up and down, who had heard of my infamy.

That *I* was drawn away by my Wife, from Mr. *Lobb* and his congregation, and was fallen from God, and the institutions of Jesus Christ to be of the Church of *England*.

Many

Many ſharp debates I had with Mr. *Lobb* and ſeveral of the Brethren; which I omit in this place:

But that which above all things did Anchor my Faith, in the way of this Church, was that excellent book, of the learned and pious Dean of St. *Pauls*, entituled *The Unreaſonableneſs of Separation*: The Arguments therein are ſo convincing and ſtrong, there is no reſiſting them.

And in this Faith, I hope to continue all the reſt of my dayes, being deeply convinc'd that in what Nation, or Country ſoever I live, I am bound to obſerve the Laws of that Nation, even in matters of Religion, *when they are not repugnant to the Laws of God*, which are contained in the Books of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*.

Now there being nothing in the Church of *England* contrary to the Scriptures: there is nothing to be ſcrupled by any ſincere, and loyal Soul: which I doubt not, but by manifeſt proof will be clearly evinced.

O Lord how great is thy goodneſs, and thy love, paſt finding out, thy mercy of a truth endureth for ever, and thy faithfulneſs throughout all generations.

Thou haſt promiſed and performed unto thy ſervant that which in righteouſneſs proceeded out of thy lips; thy name be exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe for ever.

Thou haſt led me into the way of truth, thou haſt kept my feet from falling, and eſtabliſht me upon a rock.

Thou haſt made me to rejoice in the light of thy countenance, and favour which is better than life.

And

And since for thy sake I am fallen under the displeasure of my brethren, my friends and acquaintance; yet I can rejoice as those, that have found great spoil.

O let me never forfeit thy favour, but alwaies keep a conscience void of offence, towards God and towards man.

O thou who hast opened mine eyes; bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

A more particular Account of my adhering to the Presbyterian *way and my proficiency therein.*

GOD, (who in infinite Wiſdom doth order and diſpoſe of all things) did according to his own good pleaſure, bring me to the knowledge of the truth, which is by Jeſus Chriſt. The methods of Gods Providence in this reſpect are very remarkable.

Firſt, That God ſhould deny Converſion to me in the Church of *England*. And

Secondly, That he ſhould direct me to the *Presbyterian* Party, and there make wicked men the chiefeſt inſtruments in that glorious work.

Firſt, That God ſhould not make the Miniſtry of the Church of *England*, effectual, for the convincing of me, and ſome others; is not becauſe God hath withdrawn his Spirit, and his Bleſſing, as ſome think, (whoſe Faith in that is but Fancy.) For (bleſſed be God) his Spirit appears moſt powerful, in turning thouſands from ſin, to Jeſus Chriſt, as might be made appear abundantly; but that in this place it would be too long a digreſſion.

Secondly, That it ſhould pleaſe God to let me fall among the *Presbyterians*, and make me ſenſible of my loſt and undone condition by reaſon of the fall, while without an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; even amongſt them; is not becauſe God hath a more peculiar kindneſs for them than others: but it is

First, To discover, that the Spirit of God is no way confined, or limited, to one opinion, or Sect among Christians; but doth universally discover it self to be active every where in all places, in the Church of *England* as much as in any place besides.

For Gods proceeding in this nature, discovers his universal kindness to all men, and his unwillingness *that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Secondly, God doth thereby manifest his wonderful love to the Elect.

There is no Religion in the World, but (it is to be hoped) that God hath some elect therein: Therefore as God by his Providence doth disperse his Elect, some among one Sect, and some among another; he doth ordinarily make some amongst whom they are the instruments of begetting them *to a lively hope, and Faith in Christ.*

Yet sometimes he doth by extraordinary Acts of Providence, direct unto some special means, for the conversion of others.

Whence it appears, that all the Elect of God, are brought to Faith and Repentance, which are the essential parts of Conversion, and without which there can be no Salvation.

And in a Christian land where they all hold the same common rules for Salvation; though they differ in their Judgments, in lesser matters; yet the Spirit of God, makes no difference at all, in bringing home the number of the Elect, to himself, by Regeneration; not confining it self, to the *Presbyterians*, more than the *Church of England*, or to one particular form, more than another.

Which

Which teacheth us the great neceſſity of Union, in ſuch a Nation; and the great ſin of breaking that Bond, where the Spirit of God hath not broken it.

And as theſe are ſome of the reaſons why God doth by his Spirit, convince Sinners of the evil of their wayes where he will: ſo there are other reaſons by which it will appear that he can do it when he will, and by whom he will.

Firſt, God can convert ſinners when he will; in Childhood, or in Youth; in Manhood, or in old Age, ſome God calls *early at the firſt hour*, ſome at the *third*, others not till the *ninth* or *eleventh*; ſome like *Jeremiah*, or *John Baptiſt*, are *ſanctified from the Womb*; others come not to Repentance, till ſickneſs or old Age ſeizeth upon them, or (which is but rare) in the laſt hour of their life, as the Thief upon the Croſs. But

As late Repentance, and Faith, is ſeldom true; yet true Repentance and Faith is never too late; and we uſe to ſay, better late than never.

God is confined to no time; he can ſave a ſinner from the brink of the grave, and crown him with Eternal Glory: though it is not Gods uſual courſe, and method, ſo to do: and it is dreadful preſumption, in any to depend upon it, a ſin that ſeldom eſcapes unpuniſhed in another world, a plain tranſgreſſion of the poſitive Will of God. For,

Remember [now] *thy Creator in the dayes of thy Youth*; and *ſeek* [firſt] *the Kingdom of God and the righteouſneſs thereof*: is a duty, before any other, about worldly affaires.

Secondly, God can make uſe of whom he will as inſtruments, to carry on this new birth upon

the ſoul: yea and what he pleaſeth may greatly conduce thereunto.

For, as God is a Spirit, omniſcient, and omnipotent; nothing can confine him in any of his Operations, eſpecially, in working Grace in the hearts of ſinners; he makes uſe of good and bad, as pleaſeth him, to call home the number of the Elect.

Some there are whoſe buſineſs it is to labour the Salvation of others; and yet they themſelves become *caſt-aways*: and notwithſtanding they are made inſtruments of ſaving hundreds, yet if God change not their own hearts, they will fall ſhort of Salvation themſelves.

Hence it is that many men of wicked lives and converſations meet with ſucceſs on this account, ſome of the Church of *England*, and others among Diſſenters: and I am apt to think that their Succeſs depends upon the number of the Elect that God hath in thoſe reſpective places, where they have their Station.

However, this is certain from Scripture, and experience; that many *preach in the name of Chriſt here, that ſhall be ſeparate from the preſence of Chriſt hereafter*, and to all Eternity.

Of this ſort (I fear) were thoſe, whom it pleaſed God to make inſtruments of good to me.

I ſpeak not this to reproach either their Perſons, or their Profeſſion; but only to take off the reproach which Diſſenters have caſt upon the Church of *England*, by repreſenting all their own guides, as moſt holy and ſincere; and thoſe of the Church as prophane and wicked wretches; from whom the Spirits influence is departed.

And

And thoſe that are pious and ſincere, (excepting a very few comparatively) are accounted Factors for the Pope.

By which means an antipathy is created in the generality of Diſſenters againſt this Church; Thereby obſtructing the great deſign of the Goſpel; which is Love and Union.

And as long as there are thoſe, who ceaſe not to adminiſter the cauſe; it cannot be expected but that the ill effects will follow.

The God of heaven convince every one of them, of their evil herein, as well as me.

I confeſs, I had mighty prejudices againſt the Church, upon this Account; which I received by my frequent converſes with thoſe who had very little kindneſs for her.

When I was an Apprentice, I lived not far from *Newmarket*, where Mr. *Farrendine* Preached, and there being a Kinſwoman of my Maſters, who delighted much to hear him, ſhe perſwaded my Maſter, to let me go with her; (who conſtantly went to Church before) and coming amongſt them being poſſeſt with a ſtrong opinion, (from the relation I had) that I ſhould hear as it were an Oracle from Heaven ſpeak unto me.

I did compoſe my ſelf with more than ordinary ſeriouſneſs to attend upon him; and it pleaſed God that Mr. *Dod* preached that time, to whom I gave moſt diligent attention, ſuppoſing him to be the other Perſon.

Yet God was ſo gracious to me at that time, as to faſten ſtrong convictions upon me of the neceſſity of leading, a more ſtrict, and godly courſe of Life, than before.

This man I greatly praiſed, when I came home; but was told the other was ſtill a more excellent man; which made me have a longing deſire, to hear him.

The next Lords day I went again, with as great ſerioufneſs as before; and was as much taken with Mr. *Farrendines* Preaching as the others and by a continual attendance upon him; I was much enlightened in the *things that did belong to my eternal peace*; and a great change did paſs upon my Will and Affections.

At that time I was mighty inquiſitive to know the true and ſafe way to *Sion*, and to that end I was diligent in hearing Sermons, in reading good Books, and converſing with Chriſtians, about ſuch things as might profit my Soul: and in no wiſe could reſt ſatisfied till I had ſome comfortable grounds to hope that God had begun a good work in me. And

Being a conſtant Hearer of Mr. *Farendine*, for the ſpace of two years, I became acquainted with divers of his Congregation that brought me into a perſonal acquaintance with himſelf; who at my requeſt admitted me to be a member of his Congregation; in which Communion, I continued the ſpace of one whole year.

This Mr. *Farrendine*, ſome years before, had brought a great ſcandal upon himſelf; which did very much impair his Credit among the wiſer ſort of men; but for the ſpace of three years after, he behaved himſelf ſo well, that to all outward appearance, he was become a new Creature; a moſt ſincere, mortified, and holy Man; and had in a great meaſure recovered his Credit

Credit and Reputation; having gathered together a fine congregation, which brought him a conſiderable income.

But diſcovering his Hypocriſie again, by falling into his old accuſtomed practiſes; did not only diſgrace himſelf for ever; but rent his Congregation aſunder: who ſeparated themſelves, ſome to one place and ſome to another; though others reſolved to keep in a body together, till God provided for them a Guide.

From all which will plainly appear,

Firſt, That when the Providence of God doth caſt his people, where there is a wicked Miniſter, he will make that Miniſter inſtrumental of ſaving their Souls, by convincing them of the evil of their wayes, and the neceſſity of leading a holy Life, and Converſation; though after all he himſelf ſhould become a Caſt-away.

Therefore in thoſe places in the Country where the Providence of God doth confine a people to ſuch a one, they ought ordinarily to attend on him; and to ſubmit to the Will of God, ſeeking to him alone, for a Bleſſing upon his Word, though delivered to them by a Covetous *Balaam*, a treacherous *Judas*, a drunken *Phineas*, &c.: looking upon it, as it is indeed, *the word of God*, and not the word of man.

Secondly, Hereby it appears that God is no reſpecter of Perſons, nor Parties among men; for where-ever God by his Providence doth diſperſe his Elect, he will procure ſufficient means for their Converſion.

If they are caſt among Heathens and Infidels there his *hand will find them*; if they are caſt a-

mongſt *Papiſts* or *Quakers*; he will find out a way to ſave them; as well as in any other Sect.

There is no doubt, but that in many Forreign parts, (where thoſe kind of Perſons inhabit by themſelves) God hath ſome Elect among them, which he will doubtleſs bring to Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, according to his infinite Wiſdom and Power.

Yet notwithſtanding in a Chriſtian Land, where the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is profeſt, according to the pure Word of God, and by the Laws thereof eſtabliſht; it becomes the Duty of every one, not to prefer his own private Fancies and Opinions before the publick Peace and Union of a Nation.

Thirdly, From this method of Gods Providence, we have no reaſon to wonder, that God makes uſe of ſuch to convert Souls, whoſe practices are highly diſpleaſing to him.

I am perſwaded that the practices of the Diſſenters, in promoting Variance, Strife, Malice, Diſſenſions, *&c.* by ſeparating from, and breaking the Peace of a true Church of Jeſus Chriſt, is as great a ſin as any in the world.

Yet notwithſtanding God is pleaſed oftentimes to make uſe of them to bring in divers of the Elect, as well as others.

But I would not be thought to abuſe diſſenters, in ſaying that they promote Diviſion and Confuſion in this Goſpel Land; for is it not evident that we are ready to devour one another by it? Experience doth ſadly convince us of our Miſery in this reſpect; and why is it? becauſe

cauſe Government will not truckle to the private opinions of theſe men.

But it is to be feared, that God will by ſome dreadful Judgment put an end to that controverſie, and teach us to agree better; and *to love as Brethren*, who ought not to *fall out by the way* about the manner of walking, ſince it is every ones deſign to arrive at the ſame place: Heaven or the *Jeruſalem* above, is the City we all aim at.

And all Diſſenters that are not very rigid, do acknowledge that the Parochial Churches of *England*, are in a ſafe way thither; notwithſtanding they are ſo contentious about inconſiderable trifles; but *if any man ſeems contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, nor the true Churches of God.*

O Lord do thou convince us of our folly and madneſs, in theſe our unchriſtian Diviſions, and animoſities; and let them not carry us into any further Confuſions.

Do thou put a check to thoſe buſie Agents who are the diſturbers of our Engliſh Iſrael, *whoever they be.*

We are through the wickedneſs of ſome (well known to thee) brought into great perplexity; but do thou O Lord ſtretch forth thy hand to deliver us.

Preſerve our King from the violence of any adverſary, and let no weapon formed againſt him proſper.

Let his Life be long; and his Reign happy and proſperous over us.

O that peace might be reſtored to this Nation, and that our hearts might be united in love together, that all might ſee a neceſſity of conforming to thoſe good,

good, and wholſome laws; which are our intereſt, as well as our Duty, to obſerve and keep.

And grant to thy ſervant a greater knowledge of thy heavenly Will, and a fixed reſolution to obey the ſame; with a courage to appear for thee, and the Church which thou haſt planted, and eſtabliſhed amongſt us, while I have a being in this world.

Great has been thy goodneſs to me, O Lord; for which thy holy Name be bleſſed and praiſed for ever and ever; Amen.

Con-

Concerning my leaving the Presbyterian *way, and my Apprehenſions of Religion then.*

HAving run over the various methods of Gods dealings with me thus far; I am now to proceed and ſhew, how it pleaſed God, to make a breach in Mr. *Farendines* Congregation, and the reaſons why I forſook him thereupon; as to the firſt I have given a hint before, and will by no means defile my Pen by relating the particular crimes he was guilty of, which were many and great; and had a kind of influence upon me to ſeparate from him, after I was convinct of the certainty thereof; but it was a long while before I could believe the truth of what was alledg'd againſt him; I had ſuch an extraordinary love for him.

Whoever I heard pray and preach (that were accounted eminent) yet I thought Mr. *Farrendine* excelled them all; I could venture to put my Life into his hand, I had ſuch a confidence in him; yea, and had it been poſſible, *I could have plucke out mine eyes*, (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks of the *Galatians*,) *for the love I did bear him.*

But when his hypocriſy was made manifeſt, my love was turn'd in hatred thereunto; though not utterly extinguiſht as to his perſon;

Upon whoſe account I have ever cauſe to bleſs God, who raiſed him up to be an inſtrument of good to my ſoul.

Yet

Yet this had a great influence upon me; to desire to be separated from him, and such who still did cleave unto him, lest thereby I should be partaker of their sin of encouraging him in his wicked practises, yet this of it self had never prevailed, had it not been.

2. That the practices of others of his Congregation became effectual for that purpose.

When I saw that his Congregation was divided, and every one did as his own inclination did lead him unto; then I broke off with the rest, and having no kindness at all for the Church of *England*, I thought it most requisite to continue with my Brethren, who lately came away from Mr. *Farrendine*, and kept together, meeting sometimes at one House, and sometimes at another, to consult together for the setling of themselves.

In this condition we remained a considerable time, some being desirous to joyn themselves with another *Presbyterian* Church; others thinking it more convenient to continue together, and address themselves to Dr. *Annesly*, and the rest of the *Synod* to procure them a Pastor, which they all concluded upon:

But most of them being desirous of an *Independant* Government, some applying themselves to Dr. *Annesly*, and others to Dr. *Owen*, and his Party; for advice, and assistance, were directed to one, or another to preach for them, till they could have one to their mind, that could serve them.

But in the choice of a Pastor they could not all agree, for where the generality were agreed fully

ly in their choice, particular perſons were diſſatisfied.

The firſt Perſon they pitcht upon was Mr. *James*, and ſome of them not liking him, broke off, and ſeparated: But Mr. *James* had ſomething better in his eye, and at laſt refuſed to ſerve them.

After him they had Mr. *Neſs*, who was very willing to ſerve them; but the generality did not like him, which cauſed another breach amongſt them: for when he went away, many ſeparated to follow him.

This made them fear they ſhould be broken all to pieces, before they could all agree in their choice.

To prevent which, thoſe that were left by the advice of Dr. *Owen*, Mr. *Rider*, and others, were perſwaded to enter into Covenant together; to give up themſelves to God, and to one another by the will of God; and ſo become a Church Organical.

To which end, they drew up a form of reſignation; and did all ſubſcribe thereto, excepting two or three which could not be preſent, (there being a day ſet apart for that purpoſe) of which number excepted I was one; opportunity not admitting my being preſent with them.

After this they were diligent to keep together, and had divers to preach for them, and at length accepted of Mr. *Lobb*, whom they all did approve of, reſolving that he ſhould be their Paſtor.

Between the time they left Mr. *Farrendine*, and Mr. *Lobbs* coming amongſt them, (which was conſiderable) I was under no ſpecial Obligation of continuing with them, but yet I did and gave many ſignal proofs of my love and affection to them all.

My

My apprehenſions of the great and weighty matters of Religion, upon which Salvation doth depend, I will diſcover in its proper place.

But very falſe apprehenſions I had in the other part of Religion, and contrary to thoſe I have received ſince.

Then I only looked upon the examples of others, whom I judged good Chriſtians; and thought *if I did as they, I could not do amiſs.*

Sometimes I would think within my ſelf, that my Father was a good man, and yet he did Conform to the Church of *England*, and was a Miniſter of the ſame, and that I did not follow his ſteps, which did engage me now and then to examine the matter, in order to my own ſatisfaction.

But converſing altogether with thoſe of the ſeparation, I did eaſily embrace their Notions, and follow their Examples; thinking them to be the only people of God in the Land, and had rather be of any Religion than the *Church of England*, excepting a *Papiſt* or *Quaker*.

And when I conſidered *Rom.* 13. and other places that required *Obedience to the higher Powers*, and that did inſiſt on the Office of Biſhops, *&c.* I concluded that the word of God muſt be regarded; and though I could not very well reconcile the practices of Diſſenters to it; yet I had a brave *Romiſh* implicit Faith, which clearly carryed me over all difficulties.

☞ Believing that ſuch Holy Men did not err therein, but that their practice was very good, although I underſtood not where it was grounded.

And

And finally I concluded that all they ſaid of the Church of *England* was certainly true, (with reſpect to her Miniſters, and ſervice; that ſhe did add to, and diminiſh from the Word of God; and was a going full drive towards *Rome*:) becauſe I believed they were men that would not lye, and had ſo much Charity for her, as to repreſent her far better than really ſhe was.

But now I ſee plainly that every little mote is to them a Mountain of ſeparation, and while they are earneſt to pull the Mote out of the Eye of the Church of *England*, they ſee not the great Beam which is in their own Eye.

At that time I was altogether for the *Independant* way of Church-Government, being brought in love therewith by the example of my Brethren, who ſaid there was better Orders than among the Presbyterians.

There they ſhould have more liberty to improve their Gifts, and to ſhew their Parts, although there were greater ſtrictneſs in admitting Members into their Congregations, and greater ſeverity when in.

Their high commendations of that way, together with reading of a Book, publiſht by Mr. *Foord*, intituled *The Goſpel Church*; did bring me in love therewith, which engaged me at Mr. *Lobbs* ſettlement, to become a Member of his Congregation.

And this truly was the reſult, of thoſe kind of apprehenſions, which I had about Religion; as to the dogmatical part thereof.

O Eternal and moſt Glorious Majeſty, thou that haſt preſerved me from my Mother's Womb through the

the various changes of this uncertain ſinful life) to this very moment, give me Grace that I may faithfully ſerve thee all the reſt of my days.

Thou haſt diſcovered to me a great deal of folly I have been guilty of in the admiration of mens perſons, and preferring their ways and opinions, before that ſafe way which thou haſt by thy Gracious Providence eſtabliſhed in this Land.

Thou art he O Lord to whom I have chiefly addreſſed my ſelf in all the troubles I have met withal on this account; who haſt guided me into the way of peace, and truth by thy Spirit, according to thy promiſe, and haſt heard the voice of my ſupplication.

Be thou my ſtrong Tower and Defence, and let me not become the reproach of any.

Let me ſubmit to thy Heavenly will in all thy Gracious Diſpenſations towards me, and never murmur at the ſevereſt of thy Providences.

O Lord, my Truſt is in thee, let me never be aſhamed, but let ſuch be aſhamed, who break thy commandements.

My Soul, Bleſs thou the Lord, and let not any of his benefits be forgotten.

To thee O Holy Father, by thy Spirit, through thy dear and well beloved Son, be all Honour, Praiſe, and Glory, World without end, Amen.

Of

Of my Adhearing to the Independant Way, *and Advancement therein.*

NOtwithſtanding all theſe Gracious Diſcoveries, of Gods Infinite goodneſs to me, I was ſtill infected with this Poyſon of Separation, hating the Laws and Government of Chriſt eſtabliſht in this Realm; being partial in my Obedience, and ſwel'd with ſtrange Notions, and high conceits of ſerving him, in a purer way than he by his Providence (in Infinite Wiſdom) hath provided for us, and confined us unto.

Yet nevertheleſs, God ſuffered me ſtill to perſiſt, and imbrace the *Independant Way*, before he did convince me of my ſin, and whither it did lead unto.

For Mr. *Lobb* being approved of, and after a conſiderable time of Tryal, received into the Church, and called to the Office of a Paſtor, by the Members of it; he being willing to undertake the ſaid Office of a Paſtor; a day was ſet apart for his conſecration, at a private houſe, where divers Miniſters were appointed to meet, (as well Presbyterian, as Congregational men) who after the *Independant* way, ordained him, without laying on of hands; and the Church in token of their free choice of him to be their Paſtor, held up their hands.

After this, many Members were admitted, to enlarge the Congregation among whom I was very forward, and being examined about my fit-

neſs for Church-fellowſhip, and breaking of bread, I was admitted into the Congregation, promiſing *to take reproofs patiently, to avoid every known ſin, and to perform every known duty, and to walk as the Goſpel of Chriſt requires in all things.*

This I particularly mention that it may appear what kind of Covenant I made, and wherein I have broken the ſame by ſeparating from them.

My ſeparating from them, being but an *effectual putting that Covenant in Execution*, by avoiding that groſs ſin of Diſobedience to Magiſtrates, and therein obeying the Goſpel of Chriſt, which by continuing with them, I never could accompliſh, but ſhould have advanced higher and higher, to the greater diſturbance of my peace in the latter end.

In this way I was ſo far advanced, that I thought thoſe arguments which I had learn'd, to defend the principles of Separation, were ſuch as no power of the Church of *England* was able to ſhake, becauſe I did not underſtand the efficacy that was in them, neither would I ſuffer it to enter into my mind; till it pleaſed God in a wonderful manner to convince me of the neceſſity of Impartial judging; according as things were truly repreſented on both ſides from *Scripture* and *reaſon*.

Yet although I my ſelf am fully convinc't of evils; I judge not thoſe who are not, but humbly beg of God, they may; that it may redound to his Glory, and their comfort for ever.

Great is the malice of Sathan in riveting into the minds of people ſuch ſtrong and invincible prejudices, that can hardly ever be fetcht out; ſuch as is generally in the hearts of Diſſenters, againſt the Church of *England*, as well as Popery.

It

It is a Diſeaſe in Chriſtians which muſt be purged out, if ever they would be well, and healthy; which will infect, if not timely prevented (as it hath done many) with the greateſt enthuſiaſm.

I confeſs there are ſome of the ſame Spirit in the Church of *England* too cenſorious, and inveterate againſt Diſſenters; but amongſt them, it is an Epidemical Diſeaſe, which is the great obſtruction of peace and union amongſt us; and are to be markt, and avoided as ſuch who cauſe diviſion, and are Enemies to the Intereſt of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and Authors of unſpeakable miſchief.

And they are ſuch as repreſent the *Church of England* to be *Popiſh* and *Antichriſtian*, or advancing towards *Popery*; or ſuch that repreſent her to be ſo far corrupt and degenerate, as to loſe the bleſſed influence of the Holy Ghoſt, in Convincing and Converting Sinners to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Theſe being moſt apparent falſhoods, and undeſerved ſcandals, thrown upon the Church by theſe Men, they in ſo doing become the faulty Dividers.

And while there is ſuch enmity between theſe, and ſome of the Church of *England*, who do as it were *bite, and devour one another*, (as the *Apoſtle* ſaith) It is no wonder if in the end, *we are conſumed one of another.*

Theſe are the *works of the fleſh*, which God condemns and threatens with dreadful puniſhments, and are contrary to true Religion and Chriſtianity.

Before it pleaſed God to convince me that the way I walked in was diſpleaſing to him, I con-

ceived that all complyances with the Church of *England*, were abſolutely evil, and except the Church would agree with them in all things they required, It was their Duty to perſiſt in Non-Conformity, of obeying God rather than Man.

I am perſwaded this is the ſence of all truly conſcientious perſons, that do ſeparate, of which ſort I believe are many affixed Members of particular Congregations, who have ſtrong apprehenſions of the ſinfulneſs of ſome things that are impoſed upon them by the Church of *England*, that compels them to withdraw from her Communion, and are nevertheleſs ſincere Chriſtians, though deceived in many things.

And we ought to be very earneſt, in our dayly prayers to God, that he would make them ſenſible of their great ſin, and bring them into the way of true obedience.

For theſe perſons acting really and conſcientiouſly, according to their ſence of things, are not to be blam'd ſo much as thoſe who make deceitful repreſentations of thoſe weighty Affairs unto them, faſtening into their minds ſuch a firm belief of the truth of what they ſay, as is moſt difficult to be removed, though grounded but on a weak and ſandy foundation, as plainly appears to all thoſe that are unbiaſſed.

This I ſpeak (by the way) in favour of thoſe that are ſincere and upright from my own experience, wiſhing with all my ſoul, that they would be ſo kind to themſelves, as to be a little jealous over their own hearts, [leſt] they ſhould be deceived in the matter of ſeparation.

Frequent examination of this matter is very requiſite, taking in the full ſtrength and force as well

well of their Adverſaries Arguments as their own, without the leaſt partiality.

As I was advanced in the *Independant way* to a great contempt of the *Church of England*, believing her to be much inclin'd to Popery, ſo I was highly incenſt againſt *Popery* it ſelf, and furniſhed my ſelf with Arguments ſufficient to defend my ſelf againſt that Party, among many of whom I had my Converſation when I was out of my time; of which I will preſently give a more particular account.

O! The depths, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God, how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! Who can utter the mighty acts of God, or who can ſhew forth all his praiſe.

His goodneſs endureth for ever, and his truth reacheth unto the Clouds; It is God that hath appeared in mercy to his Servant, for which my ſoul ſhall praiſe him for ever, and ever.

O Lord, I pray thee for the proſperity and welfare of Zion, *and the peace of* Jeruſalem, *that thou wouldſt create Peace within her Walls, and Righteouſneſs within her Pallaces; O Bleſs thy Church Univerſal, and particularly, this thou haſt planted in theſe Nations, the Head and Members of it, and give us all Charity, the bond of peace; through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord,* Amen.

Of the Temptations I met with from the Papiſts, *and the way of my eſcape.*

OF all the Sects amongſt Chriſtians, I always have had the greateſt averſion for *Papiſts* and *Quakers*; yet, notwithſtanding, I have ſo much Charity for them both, as to believe (that ſuch who ſincerely practiſe what they know, and deſire to know what they ſhould practice, altho' they are kept in ignorance of what they ought to know, by thoſe who have the greateſt influence over them) that they may be ſaved.

Their principles are equally alike deſtructive to the Fundamental Doctrines of the true Chriſtian Religion; which to defend is the great Duty as well as Intereſt of every Believer, ſo far as God enables him.

It pleaſed the alwiſe God after I had been made acquainted with the manifold Errors of the *Church* of *Rome*, that I ſhould be brought under ſome tryals from that party.

After I was out of my time I took a Room in *Drury-Lane*, in which Houſe were Lodgers that were *Papiſts*, who after I had been there a few days, took acquaintance with me, and in proceſs of time diſcovered tl eir deſign, by attempting to evince the excellency of their way above all others; which they fell wonderfully ſhort in: And being but talking Women that could give no ſolid reaſon for what they did believe, and affirm with abundance of confidence; I gave but little regard unto them. But

But they became unwearied in their attempts, being perſwaded that they ſhould greatly merit at the hands of God, if they could but convert me to their Faith; But they found I was ſo far rooted and grounded in the Proteſtant Religion, that it was too difficult a work for them to accompliſh; And finding I required ſuch reaſons, that they were not able to give, they concluded that if I were but acquainted with ſome of their Prieſts, I ſhould from them receive reaſons ſufficient to convince me, that out of the Church of *Rome* was no ſalvation.

To promote this work they became mighty induſtrious, and by a wile accompliſhed the ſame, though the effect did no way anſwer their expectation in it.

Theſe Perſons frequently did reſort to *Newgate*, where were ſeveral Popiſh Prieſts, amongſt the reſt, one Mr. *Micarty* an *Iriſh* Gentleman, and an intimate Friend to thoſe Gentlewomen, being Father Confeſſor to one, or both of them.

Upon a day one of theſe Gentlewomen told me there was a Sermon to be preached at *Newgate* to the Priſoners the day following, and askt me if I would go along with her to hear it, which I condeſcended to, and on the morrow made me ready to go with her; where we were between Nine and Ten a Clock in the morning, but inſtead of going to the Chappel to hear a Sermon, we went to the Prieſts Chamber, where we continued till ſix a Clock at Night, and where I was entertain'd with all the reſpect and civility imaginable, and our debates about Religion were with abundance of calmneſs and moderation.

The first point of Controversie that did naturally present it self, was merit, where he asserted, 'That the good works of Christians did merit at 'the hands of God; or that Christians performing 'those good works which God hath commanded, 'God is obliged to make good the promises he has 'made to such, and such performances, and are as 'much their due, as Workmans Wages. Illustrating the same by many similitudes of that Nature.

To which I reply'd, it was my judgment, that the fall of our first Parents did conveigh such impotence to us that did utterly disable us from performing any good work so exactly as God requires at our hands, therefore we did not merit.

Our understandings (by the fall) are so darkned, that we do not know what is the good will and pleasure of God: Our wills are so vitiated and corrupted, that we are averse to whatever is good, but exceeding prone to evil; the understanding being blinded (by the fall,) represents good evil, and evil good; sin to be most pleasant and delightful, and goodness most burthensome and grievous; which makes the will vehemently pursue the evil, and reject the good.

Hence all our Affections are so disordered; as our Love, Joy, Desire, Hatred, Delight, &c. which are in Unregenerate Men placed upon wrong Objects, till God by Grace doth work a change upon them, therefore it will follow that *Unregenerate Men cannot merit, nor do any thing well-pleasing in the sight of God.*

And as for the Regenerate (or such as are turned from the evil of their ways) there is a great difference; for although they do not merit, yet *their good works are acceptable in the sight of God,*

God, becauſe of the merits of our Lord Chriſt Jeſus, which is imputed to them, and made theirs by faith.

Yet there is ſo much imperfection and ſin attends the beſt of their performances, that renders them lyable to Gods infinite diſpleaſure, and having done all, *they are ſtill but unprofitable Servants*, and are infinitely owing to the free Grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt, for the acceptance of any of their ſervices, or enjoyment of any mercy which they receive.

Therefore they cannot merit, becauſe they cannot exactly perform the condition of the promiſe, which had it been poſſible for them to have done, there had been no need of Chriſt to come in the fleſh, to dye, and to ſuffer for the ſins of the World.

But he reply'd, 'That God gave to every man 'a Talent of Grace to improve for their Souls 'Salvation, and that it was in mans power to 'improve it to a good or bad uſe, as he pleaſed; 'for which reason every man was the ſole Author 'of his own deſtruction.

I anſwered him, I did believe, *That mans deſtruction was of himſelf, and that God would have all to be ſaved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth*, and had provided ſufficient means for their Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt: Yet, notwithſtanding, (by the fall) our wills being ſo inclin'd to evil, and averſe to whatever is Holy: *We will not come unto Chriſt, though thereby we might have Life.*

Yea, though God doth wonderfully manifeſt his unfeigned deſire that all Sinners ſhould be ſaved, not only by inviting them freely, but by expoſtulating the caſe with them, to turn unto him, ſaying, *Turn ye, Turn ye, for why will ye die; As I live, ſaith*

ſaith the Lord, I take no pleaſure in the Death of him that dyes, but had rather he would return and live.

Yet ſuch is the obſtinacy of Mankind, that (although God hath ſent Chriſt to ſave them, and gather them together, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings) they will not come unto him.

But God being more merciful than Man deſerves, reſolves to pluck ſome as *brands out of the fire*, and to make them Heirs of Salvation through Chriſt, to whom he hath promiſed *a ſeed*; and, *that he ſhall ſee the travel of his Soul, and be ſatisfied*: and though the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil do by their curſed temptations oppoſe them in coming to Chriſt for Salvation, yet he ſhall *divide the ſpoil with the ſtrong, and by his Almighty Arm ſhall ſave all that the Father giveth unto him.*

And as for the reſt who *deſpiſe the long-ſuffering, and forbearing mercy of God*, will become *Veſſels of wrath fited for deſtruction.*

Whence it follows that Men by Nature will not come to Chriſt; nay, Sin and Sathan binds them ſo faſt, that they cannot come to Chriſt.

Not that the Devil keeps them againſt their wills, but by his temptations makes them willing to ſerve him, and obſtinate againſt all the pretious invitations, and offers of Chriſt in the Goſpel; ſo that there muſt paſs *a change* upon the Underſtanding, the Will, and the Affections, before a perſon can be ſaved, which will appear in a through Reformation of the whole man, by leading a Holy Life and Converſation.

'But he made reply again, that all Mankind 'did receive true Grace from God, which was

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'sufficient for their Salvation, and that if they 'did not improve it, 'twas their own fault.

To which I demanded of him if a man might fall away from true Grace?

He anſwered, 'Yes, for many did fall away 'into Apoſtacy.

Then ſaid I, ſuch were never endued with true Grace, (which makes them the Children of God) for if they had, they would have been *kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation.*

He further replyed, 'That there were ſeveral 'degrees of Grace, ſome of which, Men might fall 'from, and periſh for ever; but to ſome God did 'vouchſafe ſpecial Grace, by which they ſhould 'perſevere unto the end, from which it was im-'poſſible for them ever to fall away totally and 'finally.

At which I ſmiled, ſaying, Sir, I am very glad to hear you acknowledge ſo much, that is it I have been pleading for; which now you have granted.

I acknowledge, that God doth vouchſafe to all men common and reſtraining Grace, which doth not only prevent them in their wicked deſigns, but doth alſo ſtrive with them, to leave their evil ways, and turn to God, which they refuſing, become the Authors of their own Eternal ruine.

We diſcourſed alſo concerning Tranſubſtantiation, with abundance of calmneſs, notwithſtanding the oppoſiteneſs of our Opinions; he aſſerting the *real preſence in the Elements conſecrated*, and I denying the ſame.

His Arguments for proof were vain and abſurd, both againſt ſence and reaſon; He ſaid, 'They

'They believed it was ſo, becauſe Chriſt had 'ſaid it, and Chriſt did not come to deceive, but 'when he ſaid, This is my Body, (*this Bread*) 'they believed he ſpoke truth; God forbid that 'we ſhould think, (much leſs ſay) that Chriſt is 'a Liar.

I made anſwer that Chriſts body at that time, was really changed into bread, in the ſame manner as it was at other times really changed into a Vine, or a door, or many other things which in Scripture he gives himſelf the denomination of: *I am a Vine, I am the Door* ſaith Chriſt; and was Chriſt really ſuch?

'No, *ſaid he*, theſe were metaphorical ex-'preſſions.

I anſwered again, even ſo is this, and withall I askt him, if it were granted, that there were ſuch a change paſt upon the Bread, and Wine, then why did it not appear by the form, colour, or taſte thereof? or elſe I muſt be made to believe it is, and yet it is not, I muſt believe it is changed, tho' I perceive by all my ſences it is really not changed.

To which he reply'd, 'That though the ſub-'ſtance was changed, yet the accidents (of form, 'taſte, colour, *&c.*) did remain; in proof of which he could not explain himſelf to my capacity, (or at leaſtwiſe Conviction) with his abundance of School-Divinity.

The ſubſtance of what I urged againſt him, is comprehended in a following Letter to one of his Diſciples; for which reaſon I here omit it.

We had other diſcourſe about *Confeſſion to a Prieſt*, and about *Concupiſcence being no ſin*; I affirming it was, and the occaſion or original of other ſins. But

But not very well remembring the ſame, I'le forbear, having given only the ſubſtance of what was argued on both ſides, and in ſome things the expreſs words, though not in all, becauſe of the weakneſs of my memory.

This took away the ardency and fervour of the forementioned perſons in their attempts upon me, and made them almoſt deſpair of ever accompliſhing ſuch a thing.

Yet they did neglect no opportunity, having ſome ſmall hopes ſtill, that if I went but frequently to the Prieſt to viſit him, he would in time convert me, (as they call it) telling me I was a ſtrange Perſon that would not hearken to any thing of reaſon, from ſuch a one as he, who ſuffered ſo much for the ſake of Chriſt.

To whom I made anſwer, that he with others ſuffered for their offences, in breaking the Laws, and ſome for horrid Treaſons, and barbarous Cruelties, deſigned againſt poor innocent Proteſtants; and as for his Reaſons, they were not at all convincing unto me, but did much more confirm me in the Faith I profeſſed.

One of the Gentlewomen, who was a Widow, thinking I had an averſion to their Religion, meerly becauſe it was generally exclaimed againſt by Proteſtants; and becauſe I did not underſtand the choice, and excellent parts thereof; took occaſion to ſhew that it was the portion of Chriſtians to ſuffer wrongfully for the ſake of Chriſt, and that they were perſecuted for Religion, and Conſcience ſake, and looked for a great bleſſing at the hands of God, for their Patience, and chearfulneſs under their Sufferings.

And to ſhew the excellency of their Religion, lent

lent me a book, wherein her Husband had written many pretty definitions of Moral Vertues, together with ſome few inſtructions for a Religious Perſons behaviour both alone and in company, with ſome choice prayers, to ſome peculiar Saints, and nothing elſe of any moment.

And reſolving that nothing ſhould be wanting to bring about ſo great a deſign, ſhe bid me read it, and conſider it well, which I thankfully received from her, promiſing that if I could find greater weight in the reaſons they urged, than thoſe which I had already conceived in favour of my own Opinions, I would change; reſolving that whatever I found to be really moſt agreeable to Holy Scripture, ſhould be the matter of my Choice.

To which ſhe reply'd, Lord! do you think we are taught any thing that is againſt the Scripture?

Yes Madam (ſaid I) I verily believe, and dare venture to prove that you are taught many things which are againſt Scripture.

Ho, ho! (ſhe replyed again) you are deceived in that; and when you have read this Book, you will be convinc'd of the contrary.

The book was above half of it waſte Paper, wherein (after I had peruſed what was written) I did write down a Creed, which I took out of a Book called *The Safe Way*, which is as followeth.

A Brief Confeſſion of the Churches Faith, contained in a Creed, ſtedfaſtly to be believed by every true Roman Catholick, *and to be added to the* Nicene Creed; *being preſcribed by Pope* Pius *the Fourth, to be received with an Oath, and according to the form of the Apoſtles* Creed, *is divided into theſe Twelve Articles.*

'*Firſt*, The Apoſtolical, and Eccleſiaſtical 'Traditions, and other Obſervances and 'Inſtitutions of the Church of *Rome*, do I 'firmly admit and embrace.

'*Secondly*, The ſacred Scriptures according to 'that ſence, which our holy Mother the Church 'hath holden, and doth hold, (whoſe office it is 'to Judge of the true ſence, and interpretation 'of Holy Scripture) do I admit, neither will I 'ever receive or expound it, but according to 'the uniform conſent of the Fathers.

'*Thirdly*, I do alſo profeſs that there be truly 'and really ſeven Sacraments of the New Law, 'Inſtituted by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and neceſ-'ſary to the Salvation of Mankind, (though all 'be not neceſſary for every man) that is to ſay '*Baptiſme*, *Confirmation*, the *Euchariſt*, *Penance*, '*Extream Unction*, *Order*, and *Marriage*; and 'that

'that they confer Grace, and that among theſe 'Baptiſme, Confirmation, Order, cannot be reite-'rated without Sacriledge; alſo I receive, and 'approve the Rites and Ceremonies of the Ca-'tholick Church, uſed in the ſolemn Adminiſtra-'tion of all the aforeſaid Sacraments.

'Fourthly, All and every the things which, con-'cerning Original Sin, and Juſtification, were 'defined, and declared in the Holy Council of 'Trent, I embrace, and receive.

'Fifthly, Alſo I Confeſs that in the Maſs is 'offered unto God a true, proper, and Propiti-'atory Sacrifice for the Quick and the Dead.

'Sixthly, And that in the Holy Euchariſt, 'is truly, really, and ſubſtantially the Body 'and Blood, with the Soul, and Divinity of our 'Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and that there is made a 'converſion of the whole ſubſtance of the Bread 'into his Holy Body, and of the Wine into his 'Holy Blood; which converſion the Catholick 'Church calleth Tranſubſtantiation: I confeſs alſo, 'that under one kind only, all, and whole Chriſt, 'and the true Sacrament is received.

'Seventhly, I do conſtantly hold, that there is 'a Purgatory, and that the Souls detained there 'are holpen by the ſuffrages of the Faithful.

'Eighthly, And alwayes that the Saints reign-'ing with Chriſt, are to be worſhipped, and 'prayed unto and that they offer their Prayers to 'God for us, and that their Reliques are to be 'worſhipped.

'Ninthly, And moſt firmly I avouch, that the 'Images of Chriſt, and the mother of God al-'wayes a Virgin, and other Saints, are to be 'had and retained, and that to them due honour, 'and veneration is to be given. 'Tenthly,

'*Tenthly*, Alſo that the power of indulgences 'was left by Chriſt in the Church, and I affirm 'the uſe thereof wholſom to Chriſts People.

'*Eleventhly*, That the Holy *Catholick* and *Apo-'ſtolick Roman Church* is the Mother and Miſtreſs 'of all Churches I acknowledge; And I vow, 'and ſwear true Obedience to the Biſhop of '*Rome*, the Succeſſor of St. *Peter*. the Prince of 'the *Apoſtles*, and the Vicar of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

'*Twelfthly*, And all other things likewiſe, I do 'undoubtedly receive and confeſs, which are de-'livered, defined, and declared by the ſacred 'Canons, and *General Councels*, and eſpecially the 'Holy *Council of Trent*; and withall I condemn, 'reject, and accurſe, all things that are contrary 'hereunto, and what Hereſies ſoever are condem-'ned, rejected, and accurſed by the Church; and 'that I will be careful this true *Catholick Faith*, '(out of which no man can be ſaved, which at 'this time I willingly profeſs, and truly hold) 'be conſtantly (with Gods help) retained, and 'confeſs'd, whole and entire to the laſt gaſpe; 'and by thoſe that are under me, or ſuch as I ſhall 'have charge over in my Calling, holden, taught, 'and preached to the utmoſt of my Power; I 'the ſaid *N.* promiſe, vow, and ſwear, ſo God 'me help, and his Holy Goſpel.

Our pleaſure is that theſe preſent Letters according to Cuſtom, be read in our Apoſtolick Chancery, and that they may be the more eaſily known unto all men, that they be there copied, and imprinted: It ſhall not be lawful therefore for any man to infringe this our Will and Commandment, or by audacious boldneſs to contrary the ſame, which if any man ſhall preſume

to attempt, let him know that he ſhall incur the indignation of Almighty God, and of St. Peter *and St.* Paul *his bleſſed Apoſtles.*

Dated at Rome *in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord,* 1564. *And in the* 5*th. year of our Papacy. Fed. Cardinalius Caſius, Caſ. Gloriervius.*

When *I* had writ this out, I did read it *verbatim* to her; which made her admire at the ſuddenneſs of the alteration, ſuppoſing I had read it as the particulars of my own preſent belief; highly extolling the ſame in every particular of it, hoping I was now turned.

Yet could ſhe not tell what to think of me notwithſtanding, for though ſhe had hope, yet it was mixed with a great deal of diſtruſt.

A few days after I pray'd her to lend me the Book again, more throughly to conſider ſome things therein, which ſhe readily condeſcended to: And then I did again write in the waſte Paper, by way of a Letter my apprehenſions of that *Popiſh Creed*, (which I had before rehears'd unto her) in order to put an end to all our debates, which is as followeth.

To

To Mrs. Carpenter, *Widow; who is the Owner of this Book: Grace, Truth, and Peace, be multiply'd through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Madam,

CONsidering seriously the value of a Soul, (which alone is worth more then a world) induceth me to shew you the danger your precious Soul is in, of being exposed, not only to the flames of Purgatory, but Hell it self; by adhering to, and embracing of a Faith, which is opposite to the true and sound Faith of Jesus Christ.

For that confession of Faith which you own, and receive as good and orthodox, may justly be called the Antichristian Faith, *it being no way grounded upon the Word of God, but is contrary thereunto, as will plainly appear by considering the particulars thereof.*

'*The first Article*, is concerning the Lawfulness 'of Ecclesiastical Traditions, and other obser-'vances, and institutions of the Church.

'How can that be lawful in the Worship, and 'Service of God, which he hath not command-'ed in his Holy Word, *when it is made a matter* '*of Faith, and necessary to our Salvation*, as all 'those Traditions of the Church of *Rome* are.

'Those written Traditions that are delivered 'by the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures of the old 'and New Testament, I receive and embrace

'with all my Soul all others of humane invention, '(*that are made neceſſary to Salvation*) I diſown 'and reject as ſinful, and ſuperſtitious for theſe 'following reaſons.

First, 'Becauſe the Scriptures being the Word 'of God, (as all the Catholicks do grant) is a 'perfect guide to direct us in all things neceſſary 'to Salvation; and if ſo, what need we other 'Traditions, Obſervances, or Inſtitutions, be-'ſides thoſe of Gods own appointing; It is need-'leſs.

Secondly, 'It is ſinful and ſuperſtitious, yea, 'and abominably wicked to introduce the Tradi-'tions, Obſervances, and Inſtitutions of Men, 'into the Worſhip and Service of God, becauſe '*Firſt* They argue a defect in God, and that he 'gave us an imperfect rule to walk by, which will 'be a great weakneſs for us to imagine, for God is 'perfection it ſelf, all his works are perfect, eſpe-'cially his Laws: Pſalm 19. 7. *The Law of the 'Lord is perfect*; 'Therefore if there be a neceſſi-'ty of theſe Traditions, Obſervances, and Inſti-'tutions of the Church in the Worſhip and Ser-'vice of God, (further than he hath given liber-'ty) then is the Scripture no ſufficient rule, but 'an imperfect thing.

'Nay, Moreover by this account it muſt be 'falſe in the teſtimony it gives of its own ſuffi-'ciency.

'Is there any thing that is neceſſary to Salva-'tion, that Chriſt our Prophet hath not revea-'led to us in his holy word? Surely no. John 5. '39. *Search the Scriptures, in them is all things ne-'ceſſary to Eternal Life*; for which ſee *Heb.* 3. 2. 'compar'd with the ſixth *verſe*.

'Chriſt

'Christ is the ruler of the Church, the house 'of God, and whereas *Moses being but a Servant,* 'was faithful in his house, much more Christ being a 'Son over the house of God, was faithful: And if 'he was faithful, then certainly he did not omit 'any thing that was necessary to the Salvation of 'our Souls.

'Yea, and moreover, *They are of themselves* 'sufficient to make the man of God perfect, throughly 'furnished to every good work.

'These things being so that the Scriptures are 'the Word of God, and as such the only infalli-'ble rule to walk by, which word of truth doth 'testifie that of themselves they are sufficient to 'guide us in all things necessary to Salvation.

'All humane Inventions, Traditions, Obser-'vations, and Institutions, are therefore not on-'ly unnecessary, but sinful and superstitious, tho 'by a *Pope*, (the Head of the *Roman* Church)' 'made an Article of Faith, and placed in the front 'of so pretended a Glorious confession.

'Thirdly, 'To put it out of question that this 'Article is not of God, but from the Devil; It 'will evidently appear, in that it is contrary to 'the expres will and pleasure of Almighty God. 'For,

First, 'God hath given us examples of his 'dreadful displeasure against such that dare pre-'sume to worship him in a way that he hath com-'manded them not, as *Nadab*, and *Abihu*, whom 'God destroyed *with fire from Heaven, because they* 'offered something to him in a way that he comman-'ded them not. Exodus 10.

Secondly, 'God doth upbraid a people for so 'doing, and exclaims against them, saying, *Who*

'*hath required these things from you*; and saith the 'Lord, *they did that which I commanded them not, 'neither came it into my mind, that they should com-'mit such abomination, and cause the people to sin,* 'Jer. 32. 31.

'God will have none set up their inventions 'by his Institutions, and Christ saith expressly, 'in vain do ye worship me, who *teach for Do-'ctrines the commandments of men*, Matth. 15. 9. 'Mar. 7. 7, 8. And the Apostle St. *Peter* saith in 'the 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. *That the Conversation of such is a 'vain conversation who are zealous for the Traditions 'of their Fathers.*

3. 'But above all God pronounceth dreadful 'Anathema's, and Curses upon all such who in-'troduce any thing into the Worship and Service 'of God, that he allows not of, and is not re-'vealed in the Word of God: To the Law, and to the Testimony, if it be not according to this word, it is because there is no truth in it.

'All those Traditions, Observances, and Insti-'tutions of men, that are not according to the 'Scriptures are accursed of God *Gal.* 1. 6, 7, 8, 9. 'and *Revel.* 22. 19. Curses and Plagues are there 'threatned to such, as preach up what the Gos-'pel doth not enjoyn.

'And truly when persons neglect to search the 'word of God, and slight it, not loving the 'truth according to the Scripture; It is but just with God to *send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lye, that they all might be damned to-gether, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*; 1 *Thess.* 2. 10, 11, 12. 'And let 'this suffice to prove that this first Article is not 'of God, but from the Devil.

2. 'As

2. 'As to the ſecond Article, which is to re-'ceive the Sacred Scriptures in the ſence, which 'the Church hath, and doth hold, and according 'to the uniform conſent of the Fathers; all that 'I have to ſay unto it is only this,

'That God hath given the Scriptures for all 'that can to read them, he *commands all* to ſearch 'into them, and *highly* commends thoſe that do 'ſo: *He pronounceth them* bleſſed that read, and 'they that hear the words thereof, *giving the 'greateſt incouragement for all to ſtudy them*, John '5. 39. Acts 17. 11. Rev. 1. 3.

'And all things neceſſary to mans Salvation, 'are ſo plainly delivered, that he that runs, may 'read, and underſtand them.

'Moreover, *he giveth his Spirit which helpeth our 'infirmities, by which we come to underſtand the deep 'things of God.*

'Neither is the Faith of any man in this mat-'ter, to be ſubjected (*nolens, volens,*) to the 'Judgment or determination of the Church, or 'any other whatſoever; becauſe that Faith which 'is grounded upon Humane Teſtimony, is but 'Humane Faith, and will not profit unto Salva-'tion: And ſuch is that implicit Faith of believ-'ing as the Church believeth, a Faith that can-'not ſave.

3. 'The third Article (which enjoyneth the 'belief of ſeven Sacraments, that is Baptiſm, Con-'firmation, the Euchariſt, Pennance, extream 'Unction, Order, and Marriage, and that theſe 'conſer Grace, and that the Rites and Ceremo-'nies of the Church of *Rome* uſed in the Admi-'niſtration of them are good, and to be embra-

'ced: the belief of which) is very dangerous, 'and pernicious: For,

1. 'Chriſt hath inſtituted but two Sacraments 'in the Goſpel, *viz.* Baptiſme, and the Holy 'Euchariſt, (or Supper of the Lord), as for the 'reſt, they are no more Sacraments than Pray-'ing, and Singing, or any other Ordinance of 'Chriſt; and the reaſon is, becauſe by ſome out-'ward viſible ſign of Chriſts own appointing, is 'repreſented to the Faith of a Chriſtian, an in-'ward Spiritual Grace: As for Example.

'In *Baptiſm* the outward ſign which Chriſt hath 'inſtituted, is waſhing with Water in the Name 'of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt; 'which repreſents and ſignifies to the Faith of a 'Chriſtian the waſhing of his Soul from the guilt 'of ſin by the Blood of Jeſus, and the cleanſing it 'from the filth of ſin, by the Spirit of our Lord 'Jeſus Chriſt.

'So likewiſe in the *Lords Supper*, the ſigns which 'Chriſt hath appointed, are Bread and Wine, 'which do ſignifie and repreſent the Body and 'Blood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which are by 'Faith apprehended, and applyed to the Soul for 'its nouriſhment, and growth in Grace.

2. 'That theſe Sacraments confer Grace, is 'falſe: For the Spirit of God works Grace in the 'heart ordinarily by hearing the word preached, '*Rom.* 10. 17. and extraordinarily by ſundry re-'markable providences: The Sacraments cannot 'confer Grace, if we duly conſider theſe two 'things.

Firſt. 'That the Sacraments are but *Seals of the* 'Covenant, to which there muſt be *a right had, be-*'*fore*

'*fore there can be a right to the Sacraments, the Seals* 'thereof'; *Rom.* 4. 11. and we can't have a right 'to the Covenant, but by Faith; therefore Faith 'muſt neceſſarily go before our having a right to 'any of the Sacraments.

'All Gods covenanted people are Believers, 'and the promiſe is only to them and their ſeed, 'and as many as the *Lord our God ſhall call*, to be 'partakers of the Grace of the Goſpel.

'Therefore the Sacraments do not confer 'Grace, but increaſe, and ſtrengthen that Grace 'which is already infuſed into their hearts *by the* 'Spirit of God.

2. 'If the Sacraments confer Grace, why then 'are ſo many of the moſt eminent *Roman Catho-* 'licks, who have been partakers of all the ſeven 'Sacraments, ſo graceleſs, and ſo wicked? So 'bloody and cruel, and ſo unwearied in plotting 'againſt Chriſtians, who hold not their Opini- 'ons; I mean the Pope, and Jeſuits, with the 'reſt of that wicked Tribe.

'And experience tells us, that many amongſt 'us, who are Baptized, Married, and have been at 'the Holy Euchariſt, are ſtill vile, and ſinful, 'wicked, and abominable.

'Therefore the Sacraments do not confer 'Grace, and in believing of it, what is it elſe but 'to believe a lye?

'And as for the Rites, and Ceremonies of the 'Church of *Rome*, in the Adminiſtration of all 'theſe Sacraments; you profeſs them to be good 'and lawful, whereas they are but ſuperſtitious 'heaps of mens inventions, which are condem- 'ned, rejected, and accurſed by the word of 'God,

'God, as hath been ſhewn *in anſwering the firſt* 'Article.

'Therefore they that imitate the example of 'Chriſt moſt exactly, do that which is moſt ac- 'ceptable in the ſight of God, who is a jealous 'God, in matters relating to his Worſhip and 'Service.

4. 'The Fourth Article, *(Which is, that all* 'the things that were defined and declared by the 'Council of Trent *concerning Original Sin and* 'Juſtification, *are to be received, and embraced.)*

'I know not what the *Council of Trent* did de- 'clare, or what definitions they gave of thoſe 'profound Goſpel Miſteries, therefore *I* can ſay 'nothing in anſwer thereunto.

5. 'The Fifth Article, (*Which is, that in the* 'Maſs is offered unto God a true proper, and propitia- 'tory Sacrifice for the Quick, and the Dead.) I will 'anſwer this by propoſing a Queſtion, and will 'lay down ſome plain Scriptures that condemn 'it; the queſtion is this.

'Is not this Doctrine aſcended from the Infer- 'nal Lake, through the inſtigation of the De- 'vil; ſince it renders the perfect Sacrifice of 'Chriſt an imperfect thing? Eſpecially when the 'Scriptures do fully and plainly declare againſt 'it.

'And this Sacrifice you ſay *is not only for the Li-* 'ving, *but for the dead alſo*; which is a moſt in- 'famous, wicked, and anti-Scriptural Doctrine, 'as will appear from theſe Scriptures following. 'Rev. 14. 13. *Bleſſed are the dead that dye in the* 'Lord, *from henceforth ſaith the Spirit, they reſt from* 'their labours.

'If-

'If the Saints *who dye in the Lord, are bleſſed af-*
'*ter death, and reſt from all their labours*, what
'need they of any further Sacrifice, or prayers
'to be uſed for them, eſpecially if they be
'throughly purg'd from ſin, which the Scrip-
'ture aſſures us they are, *Rom.* 6. 7. *For he that is*
'*dead, is freed from ſin.*

'And as this Doctrine is unprofitable for the
'dead, ſo it is hurtful for the living, becauſe they
'derogate from that perfect, and compleat Sa-
'crifice of Chriſt, *which was offered once for all*;
'Heb. 10. 10. *For Chriſt after he had offered one Sa-*
'*crifice for ſin, for ever ſat down on the right hand*
'*of God; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever*
'*them that are ſanctified, whereof the Holy Ghoſt al-*
'*ſo is a witneſs to us*; Heb. 10. 12. *and* Heb. 14.
'15. *Chriſt was once offered to bear the ſins of many*,
'Heb. 9. 28.

'And if Chriſt by his once *offering up himſelf a*
'*Sacrifice, hath for ever perfected thoſe that are*
'*ſanctified*? What need then the Sacrifice of the
'Maſs?

'The Apoſtle in *Heb.* 9. 8, 9, 10. *verſes*, proves
'from the example of the Jews Sacrifices, the in-
'ſufficiency of them to take away ſin. *The Holy*
'*Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the way into the Holieſt of*
'*all was not yet made manifeſt, whilſt the firſt Taber-*
'*nacle was yet ſtanding, which was a figure of the*
'*time then preſent: In which were offered both Gifts*
'*and Sacrifices, that could not make him that did the*
'*Service perfect, as pertaining to the conſcience; which*
'*ſtood only in meats and drinks, and divers waſhings,*
'*and carnal ordinances, impoſed on them, until the*
'*times of Reformation.*

'This

'This is just like the Popish Sacrifice of the 'Mass, which God saith can never take away sin; 'though the Priest standeth dayly *Ministring*, '*and offering oftentimes the same Sacrifice, which can* '*never take away sins*, Heb. 10. 11.

'These dayly Sacrifices of the Mass, (which 'the Church calleth a true, proper, and propi- 'tiatory Sacrifice,) is repugnant to the Word of 'God; for if this Sacrifice must be so frequently 'offered, then must Christ have often suffered 'since the Foundation of the World; *But now* '*in the end of the world hath he appeared once, [and* '*but once] to put away sin by the Sacrifice of him-* '*self.*

'Therefore, *If an Angel should come and preach* '*up this Doctrine which Christ and his Apostles have* '*never taught*; *let him be accursed*; Or if the *Pope*, 'or any of his Disciples do preach up, or teach, 'in matters of Faith and Salvation, which Christ 'and his Apostles have *not appointed in the Scrip-* 'tures; *Let them be accursed*; Gal. 1. 1.

6. 'The sixth Article is concerning the real '*presence*, called *Transubstantiation*, *in which you* '*believe there is really, and substantially the Body,* '*and Blood, with the Soul and Divinity of our Lord* '*Jesus Christ*; *and that there is a conversion of the* '*whole substance of the Bread and Wine, into his* '*Holy Body and Blood*; *and that under one kind only,* '*all, and whole Christ, and the true Sacrament is re-* 'ceived.

'What dreadful and dangerous Errors are 'here, that strike at the very foundation of Chri- 'stianity it self, as will plainly appear.

First,

'*First*, In that it deſtroys the Humane Nature 'of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

'*Secondly*, In that it renders Faith uſeleſs.

'*Thirdly*, In that many abſurdities and ſtrange 'contradictions will neceſſarily follow the belief 'thereof.

'I will ſpeak a little to each of theſe.

'*First*, This Doctrine deſtroys the Humane 'Nature of Chriſt, as will appear plainly in 'that Chriſt took to him a true Body and Soul, 'which is the Humane Nature that he aſſumed 'to himſelf; and if the Humane Nature of Chriſt 'conſiſts in his having a true natural Body and 'Soul, then according to the nature of a Body 'it is finite, and cannot be in two or more places 'at one and the ſame time.

'Although Chriſt as God (with reſpect to 'his Divinity) is every where preſent, yet in 'regard of his Humanity, he is only in heaven, 'which (the Scripture ſaith) *muſt contain him till 'the general Day of Judgment.*

'That all theſe things are ſo there is ſufficient 'proof from Holy Scripture, as *Heb.* 2. 14, 15, '16, 17. *Heb.* 10. 5. *Mat.* 26. 38. *Acts* 3. 21.

'Therefore what prodigious Folly is it, to 'ſuppoſe the Body of Chriſt, to be in Heaven, 'and on Earth, at the ſame inſtant, yea and in 'divers places upon Earth too, where the Sacra-'ment is adminiſtred at one time.

'The whole Body and Blood and Soul of 'Chriſt, (by this account) is in *Rome*, in '*Paris*, in *London*, and a hundred other place, '(where

'(where the Euchariſt is received) at one, and 'the ſame inſtant of time.

'If this be not the moſt Ridiculous nonſence 'in the World, I know not what is; for it is as 'ridiculous as to ſay that Mrs. *Carpenter*, is at '*York*, at *Briſtol*, at *London*, and every Town in '*England* at this very moment.

'How abſurd it would be to affirm ſuch a thing, 'I will leave you to Judge, even ſo it is to affirm 'Chriſts real Preſence in the Sacrament, for it 'confounds, and utterly deſtroys the Humane 'Nature of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; therefore it 'is a falſe Doctrine.

'2. This Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation ren- 'ders Faith uſeleſs, even that Faith by which the 'Believer feeds on Chriſt.

'If you believe, that the Bread and the Wine 'is changed into the real Subſtance of Chriſts 'Body and Blood, you have no further need 'of Faith, but a Carnal, and Corporeal feeding 'upon him; whereas the true Believer doth by 'Faith apprehend whole Chriſt, and all his Bene- 'fits, that he hath purchaſed by his Blood, un- 'der thoſe Elements of Bread, and Wine, and 'doth make Application of them to the health 'and advantage of his own Soul.

'Chriſts Body and Blood is repreſented by 'thoſe Elements, and there is work enough for 'Faith, to apprehend, and apply him, and 'thereby to feed upon him.

'But if thoſe ſigns are changed into the things 'which they ſignifie and repreſent, then Faith is 'become wholy uſeleſs, and by conſequence it is 'no Sacrament.

'3. If this Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation 'were

'were believed, there would follow moſt horrid 'abſurdities, and contradictions, as for Ex-'ample.

'Firſt, If there be no eating Chriſts Fleſh 'nor drinking of his Blood but by receiving the 'Euchariſt; then all ſuch as dye young or before 'they receive this Sacrament, muſt needs Periſh; 'for Chriſt himſelf ſaith, *that he who eateth not 'the Fleſh of the Son of man, and drinketh not his 'Blood, ſhall not ſee life.*

'2. On the other hand, all ſuch who ſtedfaſtly 'believe the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, and 'receive this Sacrament, muſt certainly be ſaved, 'becauſe *they eat of Chriſts fleſh, and drink of his 'Blood*; who hath promiſed to all ſuch *everlaſt-'ing life.*

'If theſe things were granted, what ſtrange 'abſurdities would there neceſſarily be in Chriſts 'Words.

'True Believers (that have obtained ſpecial 'Grace from God) would be excluded Heaven, 'and a way prepared for Drunkards, Swearers, 'Whoremongers, and the moſt vile Debauched 'Perſons; for multitudes of ſuch are in the com-'munion of the Church of *Rome*, who do pre-'fer the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation as dear 'as their lives: It is a Rock on which thouſands of 'precious Souls have ſplit themſelves to all E-'ternity.

'Wherefore I beſeech you Madam, do not 'build your Faith upon any humane Teſtimony, 'neither let your Ghoſtly Father debar you from 'fulfilling the Will of Chriſt, which is, that you '*ſhould ſearch the Scriptures*, and underſtand them 'ſo, as that there may be a glorious Harmony,

'and

'and ſweet Agreement between one place, and 'another.

'But in the Church of *Rome* they have ſo far 'Apoſtatized, as to make the Scriptures ſerve 'only to promote their own carnal Luſts, and 'Intereſts, and have unanimouſly declared, that 'it is not fit for the Laity to read in them; 'whereby the poor innocent People are depriv-'ed of the good Word of God which alone (by 'the help of the Spirit) is able to ſave their 'Souls.

'But to return and ſhew further what groſs 'abſurdities will follow the Belief of this Do-'ctrine.

'3. If Tranſubſtantiation were true, then the 'glorious Body of Chriſt would be ſubject to 'Corruption; becauſe the Bread and Wine after 'conſecration will corrupt, as experience can 'teſtifie; which is impoſſible for the body of 'Chriſt to do; which was (as all believers ſhall 'be) raiſed incorruptible.

'4. If this Doctrine were true, then the Body 'of Chriſt muſt be Infinite; elſe how could all 'the World in all Ages feed upon it. But the 'Scriptures declare, *that Chriſt took to his Divinity 'a true, natural, and finite body and ſoul*; there-'fore this eating muſt be Spiritual.

'5. If the Bread and Wine be really converted 'into Chriſts Body and Blood, how came it to 'paſs that the Apoſtles did diſcern Chriſts real 'Body apart from the Bread and Wine, when 'they did firſt receive it at his own hands.

'Was Chriſts Body and Blood, then in the 'Bread and Wine? or was his Blood in his Veins,

'veins, and his Body diſtinct from the Bread and 'Wine, even before their eyes,

'This is a queſtion will puzzle the wiſeſt of the 'Champions, to give a genuine, and ſatisfa-'ctory anſwer thereunto. Either there muſt be 'two Chriſts, one that did inſtitute the Ordi-'ance, and another that was converted into 'Bread and Wine, or elſe the Bread and Wine muſt 'be ſigns to repreſent the Body and Blood of that 'true Chriſt, who was then ſpeaking to them.

6. 'If the ſubſtance of the Bread and Wine be 'changed into Chriſt's Body and Blood, and 'there remains no more Bread and Wine in the 'Sacrament after Conſecration, then why doth 'it not aſſume the form, colour, and taſte thereof?

'It would have been as eaſie for Chriſt to have 'changed the accidents as the ſubſtance, which 'would have made it a real miracle, and have 'commanded belief, as well as the miracle of 'changing Water into Wine.

'For they who were the Spectators of that mi-'racle, did taſte, and ſee that the ſame which 'was water before, was now really changed, in-'to pure Wine.

'Do but conceive this miracle according to 'the nature of Tranſubſtantiation, and you will 'ſee the damnable cheating of the Popiſh Clergy 'in blinding the people in this reſpect; for they 'ſay, though the ſubſtance be changed, yet the 'accidents remain; (*to wit*,) The form, colour, 'taſte, *&c.* which is too weak an argument to 'perſwade any honeſt Proteſtant to acquieſce in 'their Judgment.

'For it is plain, that if Chriſt himſelf had en-'deavoured to make them who were at the Feaſt

'of *Cana* in *Galilee*, to believe that the ſubſtance
'of the Water was changed into Wine, though
'the accidents had remained of the taſte, and co-
'lour of water; the people would have laughed
'him to ſcorn, and lookt upon him as a decei-
'ver, or only a pretender to work miracles.

'But the water was really changed, and that
'change did viſibly appear, both in colour, and
'taſte.

'But the Prieſts to keep the people in igno-
'rance, perſwade them that in this Sacrament,
'though the accidents of Bread and Wine remain,
'yet the ſubſtance is changed; becauſe Chriſt
'ſaith this is my Body, will you make Chriſt a
'lyer? ſay they; whereas alaſs! They conſider
'not that Chriſt makes uſe of many Metaphors
'to repreſent Spiritual things by, giving to them
'the denomination of the things ſignified by
'them; examples whereof we have ſufficiently
'in the Holy Scriptures.

Seventhly, and Laſtly, 'To add no more of
'the abſurdities this Doctrine will admit of.

'If the ſigns be changed into the things ſignifi-
'ed, where is the Sacrament?

'Your Prieſts by diſputing for Tranſubſtantia-
'tion, have robbed you of one of the Sacraments,
'and conſequently of a Seal of the Covenant of
'Grace, which ſeals unto all Believers their right
'to an inheritance *incorruptible, undefiled, and that
'fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for them.*

'Thus diſputing for the ſhadow, you loſe the
'ſubſtance of the Ordinance, and you will never
'find it, till you ſtrike hands with the Prote-
'teſtants, in believing that we eat Chriſt's Fleſh,
'and drink his Blood ſpiritually; and by Faith,

as

'as it is repreſented to us under thoſe Elements 'of Bread and Wine.

'And the breaking of the Bread, and the pou-'ring out of the Wine do moſt admirably repre-'ſent the Paſſion, Sufferings, and Crucifiction of 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

'In this Sacrament we have by Faith ſweet 'Communion with the Father, we feed upon the 'Son; and are feaſted with the Joys of the Holy 'Ghoſt: Therefore it is not a bare eating, and 'drinking of Bread, and Wine as you term it; '(for we diſtinguiſh it from common Bread and 'Wine, as it is ſet apart for a more glorious, 'and excellent uſe;) but Chriſt and all his bene-'fits, (being the things ſignified) we receive and 'apply by Faith, for our nouriſhment and growth 'in Grace.

'I hope here is enough to convince you of the 'vanity and folly of this moſt abſurd Doctrine of 'Tranſubſtantiation.

'There remaineth the latter clauſe of this Ar-'ticle, to have a word ſpoken to it, and then 'I'le proceed to the reſt, and that is this.

'You believe that under one kind only, whoſe 'Chriſt and the true Sacrament is received.

'What is this but perfectly to contradict the 'poſitive command of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. '*Drink ye all of it.*

'But your Prieſts, as the followers of Anti-'chriſt, do in this, as well as other things, di-'rectly oppoſe our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe ex-'ample we are commanded to follow, and if we '*love him, we will keep his Commandements.*

'The Seventh Article is the belief of Purgato-'ry, and that the Saints detained there are hol-'pen by the ſuffrages of the faithful.

'To admit of the Doctrine of Purgatory, is no 'leſs dangerous than all the reſt; for it makes 'way in an eſpecial manner for two great errors.

'The firſt is building our Faith upon Humane 'Teſtimony, there being no ſuch place mentioned 'throughout the whole word of God; but after 'Death *the Judgment*; the Scripture ſaith, *as* '*death leaves us, ſo Judgment ſhall find us*; which 'being true, there is therefore no Purgatory.

'And *they that are dead, are freed from ſin*, that 'is, The Souls of all the Saints, that are dead, 'are freed from ſin, and do immediately paſs into 'Glory, *Heb.* 9. 27. *Rom.* 6. 7.

'It muſt be duly conſidered that all Believers 'are Members of Chriſt's Body, and as ſuch, They 'are holy as he is holy, (though not in the ſame 'meaſure) for they partake of the ſame Spirit, *by* '*which they are ſanctified and cleanſed from all ſin,* '*before they depart out of this world.* 1 Theſ. 4. 8. 2 Theſs. 2. 13.

2. 'As Purgatory hath no ſure Foundation in 'Scripture, ſo it caſts a great deal of contempt 'upon Jeſus Chriſt, and alſo upon the Holy 'Ghoſt, the Sanctifier.

'God the Father he hath given all the Elect in-'to the hands of Jeſus Chriſt; *All that the Father* '*giveth me ſhall come to me, and him that cometh to* '*me, I will in no ways caſt out*, John 6. 37.

'Chriſt he undertook to redeem all the Elect, 'by making full ſatisfaction to the Juſtice of his 'Father for all their ſins, and by purchaſing for 'them by his Death and Sufferings, a right to

all

'all the Glories, and Priviledges of the Children 'of God.

'And the Holy Ghoſt proceeding from the Fa- 'ther and the Son, was to work upon their hearts, 'to engage them to comply with the terms pro- 'poſed in the Goſpel, and to ſanctifie them '*throughout in Soul, in Body, and in Spirit, that* 'they may be offered to the Father without ſpot or 'wrinkle, 2 Pet. 3. 14. 1 Theſs. 5. 23. Epheſ. '5. 27.

'This Doctrine doth directly oppoſe Purgato- 'ry, merit pennance, *&c.* becauſe Chriſt having 'perfectly accompliſhed mans redemption, by 'paying the full price: There remained nothing 'on the Believers part, but a ſincere Goſpel Obe- 'dience, in this preſent life; and though it be 'but imperfect, yet Chriſt's ſatisfaction, and in- 'terceſſion being perfect and meritorious; they 'at Death immediately paſs into Glory, *Luk.* '16. 22. and 23. 43.

'This Doctrine of Purgatory rendring Chriſt's 'ſufferings inſufficient, and the work of the Spi- 'rit imperfect, is therefore a falſe Doctrine.

'The Eighth and Ninth Article are moſt abo- 'minably corrupt, and erronious; for they main- 'tain the lawfulneſs of worſhipping Saints, their 'images, and reliques, which is far worſe than 'Heatheniſh Idolatry, becauſe it is againſt the 'clear light of the Scripture; *Revelations* 19. '10. *And I fell at his feet to worſhip him, and* 'he ſaid unto me, ſee thou do it not, I am thy fellow 'ſervant, and of thy Brethren that have the Teſti- 'mony of Jeſus; worſhip God.* So Revel. 22. 9.

'And as for worſhipping Reliques, or Images. 'read *Rom.* 1. 21. to the end of the Chapter. *Be-*

'*cauſe when they knew God, they glorified him not as* '*God, but profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they be-* '*came Fools, and changed the Glory of the Incorrup-* '*tible God into an Image made like unto corrup-* '*tible man*; *wherefore God gave them up to uncleann-* '*neſs*, &c.

'*Who changed the truth of God into a lye, and* '*worſhipped and ſerved the Creature more than the* '*Creator, who is bleſſed for ever, Amen. For this* '*cauſe God gave them up to vile affections*, &c. To '*the end of the Chapter.*

'There it ſhews what floods of wickedneſs, 'and errour, this Heatheniſh Doctrine (of wor-'ſhipping Creatures and Images) leads unto.

'10. Concerning the power of indulgence, 'which is another curſed link of that Antichri-'ſtian chain.

'Had I leiſure, I could eaſily make appear, that 'it is a Doctrine which makes way for the grea-'teſt of Impieties, making men deſperate in the 'commiſſion of all manner of Treaſons, Murders, 'and wickedneſſes whatſoever, as appears too 'evident at this day, by the great calamities that 'are amongſt us, through the daring inſolence of 'the men of *Rome*, being encouraged by the great 'indulgence of the *Pope*, that man of ſin, who 'hath exalted himſelf againſt our Lord Jeſus 'Chriſt.

'The Eleventh Article is not worthy of any 'anſwer; It being only a proud imperious boaſt-'ing of the *Roman* Church, who would be accoun-'ted the Mother and Miſtreſs of all Churches, 'which ſhe *is ſo far from, that ſhe is myſtically Ba-'bylon the great*, the Mother of Harlots, and Abo-'minations of the Earth.

'And

'And the *Pope* who terms himſelf the Succeſ-
'ſor of St. *Peter*, the Prince of the Apoſtles,
'and the Vicar of Jeſus Chriſt: *Is that man of Sin,*
'*the Son of Perdition, who oppoſeth and exalteth*
'*himſelf above all that is called God or that is worſhip-*
'*ped; ſo that he as God, ſitteth in the Temple of God,*
'*ſhewing himſelf that he is God, whoſe coming is af-*
'*ter the working of Satan, with all power and ſignes*
'*and lying Wonders*, 2 Theſ. 2. 3, 4, 9.

'Or the Beaſt mentioned in *Rev.* 13. *And all*
'*ſuch as vow and ſwear obedience to him, receive the*
'*mark of the Beaſt*, *Rev.* 14. 9, 10.

'The twelfth Article comprehends all other
'Errours and Popiſh Devices, carrying in it
'moſt vehement deprecations, as well againſt the
'Holy God and his Word, as againſt me who do
'oppoſe this Faith as Antichriſtan; [*I condemn,*
'*reject and accurſe whatever is contrary hereunto.*]

Obſerve, Madam, what ſtrange expreſſions are made uſe of; and how you muſt bind your ſelf with an oath, and a curſe, to abide ſtedfaſt in the belief of whatever the Church ſhall impoſe on you, how contrary ſoever it be to the Word of God, which is directly oppoſite to this Creed, whoſe original was from that impious Pope, falſely called Pope Pius the fourth, in the year 1564.

Madam, Having thus run over all the parts of this Creed, which you have ſo highly extolled, and commended, I now further preſume to caſt three or four conſiderations before you.

'Firſt, Be pleaſed to conſider that what I am
'to deliver, is out of love to your Soul; Love
'conſtraineth me to ſpeak and write unto you,
''tis a love of Pity and Compaſſion, for really

'it grieves me to ſee you led blindfold in the 'way that leads to deſtruction, whence I am 'enduced to do my utmoſt to reduce you (if 'God ſee meet) into the way to true Felicity.

'Secondly, Conſider that the way into which 'I would reduce you, is the way that God hath 'appointed, even the Holy Word of God, the 'Scriptures, from which you are far enough 'turned aſide.

'Thirdly, Conſider that the Scriptures diſco-'ver, that an union with Chriſt by Faith, is ab-'ſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

'All ſuch as are united to Chriſt are members 'of his Body, and of the true *Catholick Church*, 'of what Religion ſoever they profeſs themſelves 'to be.

'They are ſuch as are born of God, convinced 'by his Spirit, of Sin, of Righteouſneſs, and of 'Judgment; they ſee ſo much of the evil of Sin, 'that they loath and abhor it; nay they ſee 'themſelves utterly loſt, and undone by reaſon 'thereof; in a hopeleſs and helpleſs condition; 'expoſed to the Wrath of God, the juſt deſert of 'their iniquities; and they ſee that none can 'help them out of that deplorable condition but 'Jeſus Chriſt alone: *for there is no other name un-'der heaven given among men whereby they can be 'ſaved*, Acts 4. 12. Therefore they ſee an abſo-'lute need of Chriſt, to deliver them from the 'Wrath of God.

'And are enduced to go to God with ſtrong 'cries for an Intereſt in Chriſt, and are heartily 'willing to receive him, upon the terms of the 'Goſpel for King, Prieſt and Prophet.

'Theſe are the ſeeds of Faith, which are in 'order

'order to Juſtification, upon which Sanctificati-
'on, (which appears in a Holy Life and Conver-
'ſation) doth immediately follow; and all theſe
'are ſigns which do accompany the new Birth;
'without which our Saviour ſaith, *none can enter*
'*into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

'And if you have not found it thus with you,
'then are you ſtill under the power of Sin, not
'born of God, and conſequently as ſuch cannot
'be ſaved.

'But bleſſed be God I can experience theſe
'things in ſome meaſure to be wrought in my
'Soul, and thence have comfortable grounds to
'hope, that I am born of God, united to Chriſt,
'and made a member of the Univerſal inviſible
'*Catholick Church*, which is the miſtical Body of
'Chriſt, out of which there is no Salvation, the
'Members whereof are and may be bitter enemies
'to the Follies and Superſtitions of the Church
'of *Rome*, which at the beſt is but part of the
'Church of Chriſt, and a very corrupt part
'too.

'Fourthly and Laſtly, Conſider if the corrup-
'tions of the Church of *Rome* be greater either
'in Doctrine or Practice or both, than other
'Churches of Chriſt, (as I have ſufficiently prov-
'ed) it is your Duty then to relinquiſh the com-
'munion thereof, and to joyn with that Church,
'that you are convinc'd in your Conſcience is
'moſt agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, both in
'Doctrine and Diſcipline; elſe you fall under
'that dreadful curſe, *Curſed be the deceiver that*
'*hath in his Flock a Male, and voweth and offereth to*
'*the Lord a corrupt thing.*

'God will have the beſt, and if a man appre-
'hend

'hend one way of Worſhip to be more pure, and 'holy, and conformable to the Word of God 'than another; God will have that; for he ac-'counts it the greateſt Sacriledge to deprive him 'of the beſt, which is his due.

'When I was under theſe convictions, I was 'induced to ſeek out for ſound Doctrine, and 'ſuch a way to worſhip God in, as I apprehend-'ed to be in all reſpects agreeable to his moſt holy 'Will, revealed in his holy Word.

Dear Madam, I will add no more, but conclude with my prayers to God Almighty, for your Soul's ſafety, and remain,

Your moſt grateful, and humble Servant,

March the 3d, 168?. *T. Jones.*

When I came to deliver the Book to her again, I told her I had writ ſomething elſe in it, and reſolved to become of her Religion, provided Mr. *Micarty* could by Scripture and ſtrength of Argument confute the ſame, and that it was written to convince her of the dangerous errours ſhe lay under by relying upon the integrity ſhe ſuppoſed to be in her ſpiritual Guides, without examining the holy Scriptures, the Rule of Faith and Manners.

And asking me what I had writ, I told her I had writ my real Judgment concerning that *Popiſh Creed* which I had examined by Scripture, and found to be moſt *falſe and erroneous:* inſomuch that it ought to be abominated by every true Chriſtian, and that nothing but a Diabolical implicit Faith could diſpenſe with it; it being ſo contrary to the holy Scriptures.

She

She reply'd, That I was not fit to be the Judge of Scripture.

I answered her, That I would refer what I had writ, to any *Popish Priest* to give an answer thereunto; and would readily embrace whatever of truth I found therein.

And if she pleased I would read distinctly to her what I had writ, which she condescended unto.

But so strong is the power of Satan with such, whom he hath deceived, that he deprives them of the true use of their Reason and Understanding, which made her say to this effect, That all the World should never perswade her but that the *Church of* Rome *was the only way to Eternal life.*

Well! (said I) then 'tis in vain to hold any further controversie, since I am firmly establish'd in the contrary opinion.

Since which time we never had any eager disputations about matters of Religion, for finding me so contrary to them, made them conclude that all their labour was in vain.

After this (tho they were much offended at me) I enjoyed peace and quietness, having brought them to an absolute despair, of prevailing against me; and the Providence of God removed the place of my Habitation, that I had not the opportunity of visiting them as formerly, nor they of making any further attempts upon me.

O Almighty God, and gracious Father, thou hast wonderfully exalted thy rich and free grace in preserving me from every evil way which is not according to thy Holy Word.

Thou hast kept me from the blindness, and Idolatry

of

of Papists notwithstanding their attempts upon me, and thou hast also delivered me from the unreasonable practices of dissenters, in which I was taken; and thou hast set me in a sure way, even the way of the Church of England, *which is most agreeable to thy most holy word; wherein by thy Grace I may serve thee most acceptably to thy glory, and my Souls peace, and comfort, through Jesus Christ my Lord, and alone blessed Saviour.* Amen.

A par-

A particular Account of the ſeveral Debates that happened before I could be ſatisfied that it was no ſin to ſeparate from an Independent, *or Congregational Church, to embrace the Religion and Government that is by Law Eſtabliſh'd in* England.

ALL the while I was an Apprentice, I had no Acquaintance with any Religious, ſerious People of the *Church of England*, that were capable of ſhewing ſufficient reaſons; whereby to convince me that the way of Separation was ſinfull.

But did take all opportunities of converſing with thoſe of the ſeparation, whatever their opinions were, (provided they were againſt *Popery*, and the *Church of England*, and not rigid *Quakers*) they were the Companions I delighted in, and by whoſe means I ſtrengthened my ſelf exceedingly againſt the other Parties.

Whoſe Reaſons I judged carnal and of no efficacy in compariſon of thoſe which I had already conceived in favour of my own opinions in which I thought I was fully eſtabliſh'd.

Yet when it pleaſed God that I came to live among *Papiſts*, I deſired to hear all the reaſon that could be urged in defence of their Opinions, and whatever was according to Scripture I agreed with them in, and embraced.

So

So likewiſe when God ſaw fitting that I ſhould come acquainted with ſerious good Proteſtants; I was ready to embrace whatever was according to the truth on their ſide, greatly admiring that Diſſenters ſhould repreſent their Diſcipline and Worſhip ſo corrupt and ſuperſtitious, as I was really perſwaded it was, till by an impartial Examination I was convinc'd of the contrary.

In examining this matter a great deal of time was taken up, as much as I could redeem from my worldly Affairs.

During a Twelve month, and upwards I was toſt up and down upon the raging waves of an unſettled Judgment, ſometimes raiſed up with abundance of blind Zeal, and the appearance of ſanctity to the higheſt pitch of independency, and then reſtor'd to the ſtill and ſmooth waters of Conformity, where at length Reaſon, and Conſcience forced me to continue.

In this Alteration and change, many a fierce combat I engaged in: My oppoſers were many, and may be diſtinguiſhed in three Ranks.

Firſt, Mr. *Lobb*, and his *Congregation*.

Secondly, Some of my *neareſt Relations*.

Thirdly, Other *Acquaintance* among the *Non-Conformiſts*.

I have already ſhew'n particularly the means whereby I came to be convinced of the neceſſity of conforming to the *Church of England*, and I gave a hint alſo of the firſt debate that happened upon the firſt diſcovery of my reſolution to hold communion with the Church of *England*, and now come to be more particular in this matter.

Being

Being furniſhed with Arguments and Reaſons ſufficient to convince my ſelf, that Conformity was a great Duty, and conſequently Separation a formidable ſin, made me frequent the Church more than I did formally, and Mr. *Lobbs* Meeting leſs, inſomuch, that I was lookt upon as a great ſtranger amongſt them; which made Mr. *Lobb* greatly deſirous of an opportunity to diſcourſe with me: And perceiving the ſame, (at ſome convenient time) I went and gave him a viſit, who being at home, took me up into his Study; where after ſome diſcourſe paſt, he began ſeverely to reprove me for Marrying a perſon of the Church of *England*, without taking his advice antecedent thereunto; as alſo for neglecting to attend upon his Miniſtry as formerly; labouring to evince the greatneſs of my ſin in ſo doing, by many particulars.

Which made me declare unto him, that I was diſſatisfied in my mind, touching the lawfulneſs of Separation, believing it was a great ſin, and as ſuch I ought to abſtain from it, and conform till I were better ſatisfied, and convinced of the contrary.

He made reply, ſaying it was an eaſie matter to prove that they did ſeparate for Conſcience ſake, and that it was juſtifiable from Holy Scripture, which was the Rule of the whole of their Religion.

And that he believed my leaving them, and going to the Church of *England*, was more for Domeſtick peace and quietneſs, than ſence of Duty, or any thing of that Nature.

Which made me diſcover to him the various methods of Gods Providence in convincing me of this

this great Duty of Conformity (before I had any acquaintance with the perſon whom he ſuppoſed to have drawn me away) namely, the ſcruples that did ariſe within me.

Firſt, concerning the *Oath* I took when I was made free.

Secondly, My being *confirm'd by the Biſhop of* London. And

3. Diſcourſing with Learned, and Conſcientious perſons of the *Church of England.*

Theſe things I inſiſted on, though not in this order, as the means whereby I was brought to eſteem of the Church of *England*, (to take of that indecent cenſure, which he had little reaſon to paſs upon me) aſſuring him further, that it was my earneſt deſire to be rightly informed in the *way of truth*, according to the Scriptures.

And if he could convince me, that it was no ſin to ſeparate, I would ſtill, notwithſtanding continue communion with him.

He anſwered, That I never was a Member of the Church of *England*, and therefore could not be ſaid to ſeparate from her, nor be guilty of ſeparation for that reaſon.

I reply'd that my Father being a Miniſter of that Church (from whom I received not only my being but a great part of my Education alſo) and being baptized by him, layd an Obligation upon me to hold Communion with the Church of *England*, which notwithſtanding I did not, and therefore thought my ſelf guilty of Separation.

But he aſſured me to the contrary, ſaying, That Baptiſme did only initiate perſons into the Congregation of Chriſtian Profeſſors, and layd

no reſtraint upon any ones will from making a choice of a Paſtor, and people, to joyn in fellowſhip with, at years of Diſcretion.

And I having freely, and voluntarily made choice of him to be my Paſtor, was oblig'd in point of Duty, to attend upon his Miniſtry: And he in point of Conſcience, (ſo far as in him lay) to endeavour to prevent my Eternal ruine and deſtruction.

Theſe things (with others of the ſame nature) ſunk deep into my mind, and put me into great conſternation of Spirit, fearing leſt I ſhould offend God by ſeeking to withdraw from the Communion of Mr. *Lobb*.

Which made me uncapable of reſiſting thoſe Arguments he made uſe of to convince me of ſin in my procedures.

For with reſpect to the *Oath* which I took that he told me was my ſin, in not conſidering beforehand the Nature of it, and had great cauſe to repent.

Though he believed it might be ſafely taken, upon mature conſideration, and was no more then the *Oath of Allegiance*, affirming that their Meetings were no more Conventicles, than the Church of *Englands* Aſſemblies.

And as to my being *confirm'd by the Biſhop*: He told me I was under ſome grievous Temptation, and that it was a fooliſh and idle thing in me to preſume upon it, without taking advice from him, or any of my Brethren.

Saying, It was no Duty, there being many ſorts of laying on of hands, uſed among the Primitive Chriſtians, which are no way obligatory upon Chriſtians at this day, contrary to the *Anabaptiſts*,

nabaptiſts, as well as others, who bring *Heb.* 6. 2. to prove the ſame.

But the chiefeſt thing againſt me, was my rejecting their early advice, (before my affections were too far gone towards the Church of *England*, which I had in the moſt ſacred manner obliged my ſelf unto, as I would avoid the ſin of Schiſme in a very high degree) and conferring altogether with thoſe of the Church of *England*, who only endeavoured to corrupt my Judgment, and to draw me away from the pureſt Goſpel worſhip.

This made me ſomewhat to fear that I was greatly faulty, yet notwithſtanding I was not altogether ſpeechleſs, though induced to believe the moſt of what he ſaid; aſſuring him that I would ſtill adhere to what was truth, when *I* had heard what both parties had to ſay for themſelves; expreſſing great fear that not to joyn in Communion with the Church of *England*, when the Higher Powers commanded it, was a great ſin.

To which he replyed it was no ſin, in regard the Higher Powers commanded that which was ſinful; declaring that if he could any wiſe conform without ſinning againſt God, he would moſt readily do it.

Which made me demand of him, wherein it was a ſin to couform.

He made anſwer that the *terms* (which the *Church of England* made) of Communion with her, were *ſinful terms*; the particulars he inſiſted on, were *kneeling at the Sacrament, and the Croſs in Baptiſme.*

His

His Argument to prove that *kneeling at the Sacrament* was a ſin; was, that it was never practiſed in the Church till the Hoſt was worſhipped, and Altars invented, it being an Altar geſture, and no leſs than Image worſhip, a kneeling down to Bread and Wine.

I greatly admir'd at his affirming ſo much; though I was then able to ſay but little againſt the Logick and Rhetorick he was furniſhed withal to prove the ſame.

As to *the Croſs in Baptiſme*, he affirmed that it was an Ordinance upon an Ordinance, the firſt part being Chriſt's Inſtitution, and the other of Humane Invention, and therefore ſinful, by reaſon of a ſign, (*the Croſs*) that had a ſpiritual ſignification.

Not taking notice that the Church of *England* makes uſe of the *Croſs* only with reſpect to men, that they may teſtifie of its reception into the viſible Church.

But being unwilling to diſpute that point longer, I told him that ſuch who made that a ſin, which Chriſt had commanded himſelf, might with greater reaſon make that a ſin which the Magiſtrate commanded, and that was ſaying the *Lords Prayer*.

The Lords Prayer being a form compoſed by Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and by him commanded to be ſaid, (*when ye pray, ſay our Father*, &c.) and there being no command in the whole Bible to repeal the ſame, it remains firm and ſtedfaſt; and ought to be not only imitated, but ſaid with all the reſt of our Prayers, which to refuſe, as the *Independants* did, was diſobedience to Chriſt, as well as thoſe in Authority over us; for they are but the Stewards of God, to ſee his will performed, as

well reſpecting the Worſhip of God as any other concern, and they that *reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.*

This by many feeble Arguments he endeavoured to repreſent as no Duty, nor Command of Chriſt, wreſting Scripture in a very high degree, (in my apprehenſion) to vindicate himſelf.

And this brings into my mind what I heard him ſay ſome time before, when diſcourſing with him about *ſet forms of Prayer*; and particularly, *the Lords Prayer*; He ſaid, *ſhould they yield the Lords Prayer to be uſed as a ſet form, it would juſtifie the uſe of all Liturgies.*

As much as to ſay, if it be a Duty to ſay the *Lords Prayer*, which is a *ſet form*, then all other *ſet forms are lawful*, And being appointed by Authority, ought to be uſed.

Having debated a long time about *the Lords Prayer*, and buſineſs calling us both away: To end the controverſie, I told him that each party had much to ſay for themſelves, which I was not able to gainſay, and deſired to hear the controverſie duely debated between good, and able men on both ſides; being in hopes thereby to gain ſatisfaction to my own ſelf.

He askt me if I knew any one that would be willing to undertake the work againſt him.

I demanded of him again if he would be willing to diſcourſe with Dr. *Stillingfleet*, if I could procure him.

He ſeem'd very unwilling of that, neither did we come to any reſolution at all, about that propoſition, but rather concluded that the controverſie ſhould be managed by writing. I ſtedfaſtly declared my reſolution of embracing the truth,

truth on which ſide ſoever it were; and having received ſome Ghoſtly advice from him, we parted.

Yet what he had ſaid, made me a little troubled in mind, fearing leſt I ſhould be out of my duty, by breaking Covenant with thoſe to whom *I* was ſo nearly related in the bonds of the Goſpel, which made me (when *I* came home) very uneaſie till *I* had been at *the Throne of Grace*, to beg counſel at the hands of God.

When *I* had done, *I* conſulted the Scriptures, and compared what he told me unto them, which *I* conceieved to be very repugnant to what he ſaid, and was thence induced to write unto him this following Letter.

S I R,

'LAſt Friday *I* gave you to underſtand in ſome 'meaſure, (though very imperfectly,) the 'reaſons wherefore *I* have abſented my ſelf from 'your meetiug, which *I* have here ſet down in 'writing, to prevent miſtake.

'And the general reaſon thereof is, *The ſtrong 'apprehenſions I have of ſinning by ſo doing*; which 'if *I* can make appear, by plain Scriptural Ar-'guments, it will juſtifie me in what *I* have done, 'otherwiſe *I* muſt confeſs *I* lye under great guilt, 'for the omiſſion of my duty.

'Once *I* did dread going to Church, leſt *I* 'ſhould be out of my duty; and now for the 'ſame reaſon *I* even dread going to a Meeting.

'For then *I* had my Converſation (as *I* may 'ſay) wholly among them that are Enemies to the

'Church, which ſpeak the worſt they can of 'her; and I being but too credulous, had an 'averſion, (though *I* believe, not ſo great as 'ſome) to thoſe of her Communion, judging them 'Antichriſtian: But now Bleſſed be God, *I* have 'leſs malice and conceitedneſs, and for the Church, 'more Charity and Obedience; for *I* believe ſhe 'is as pure a Church as any Chriſt hath this day 'in the World; *holding faſt the form of ſound 'words in faith and love, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* '2 Tim. 1. 13.

'And *I* account it a marvellous inſtance of Di-'vine goodneſs, that God was pleaſed to diſcover 'to me my ſins by ſuch remarkable Providen-'ces: As,

Firſt, 'By making me to conſider the Nature 'of the *Oath I* took, when *I* was made free, which 'is cuſtomary to be taken by all perſons of every 'perſwaſion; and *I* never heard you, nor any 'other ſpeak againſt it, for it is but according to 'reaſon, and all the Religion in the World, ex-'cept it be thoſe that account it no ſin, to ſpeak 'evil of Dignities, and make Parties and Diviſi-'ons both in the Church, and in the State.

'After *I* had read, and conſidered the ſame, 'with what *I* heard from your mouth concerning 'the breach of *promiſſory Oaths*, *I* was deeply con-'vinced that *I* had ſinned againſt God, and had 'ſtrange fears darted into my mind, of my being 'ſeduced from my Allegiance to my Prince, by 'frequenting of unlawful Conventicles, and know-'ing private gatherings of Diſſenſious perſons 'againſt the peace of his Majeſties Subjects, which 'by degrees created in me a deſire to acquaint my 'ſelf, with ſome ſober and religious Proteſtants,

'that

'that I might hear what was to be ſaid on both 'ſides, whom I did oppoſe with all the Arguments 'I could draw both from Scripture and reaſon; 'by whoſe grave and judicious anſwers, I was 'more and more confirmed in my opinion of the 'truth of my former ſuggeſtions, one of them 'going to *Shoreditch-Church*, to hear the Biſhop 'of *London* preach, I offered to accompany him, 'which was accepted, (for I had a great mind to 'hear the Biſhop preach,) and being to confirm 'afterwards, took occaſion in his Sermon to ſhew 'the benefit as well as the neceſſity of Confirmati-'on: After Sermon was ended, I ſtood to ſee ſuch 'confirm'd, who were moſt of them known to 'the Doctor of the place, and the Biſhop very 'reverendly lay'd his hand upon them, and bleſ-'ſed them one after another.

'I alſo ſtood among them before the Biſhop, 'and approving of the thing, deſired him to 'confirme me alſo; whereupon the grave Biſhop 'lay'd his hand upon my head, as I kneeled before 'him, and with eyes lifted up to Heaven, ear-'neſtly prayed thus,

'*Defend O Lord, this thy Servant with thy Hea-'venly Grace, that he may continue thine for ever, and 'dayly increaſe in thy Holy Spirit more and more, 'until he come to thine Eternal Kingdom*, Amen.

'I prayed heartily with them, and the whole 'Congregation for theſe Bleſſings; and I ſtedfaſt-'ly believe, that God hath heard the ſame in 'mercy; for he did then ſhowr down much of 'his Holy Spirit; and after I was departed thence, 'and was alone, I had as great enlargements of 'Communion with God, and was in a lively ex-

'ercise of Grace as ever I was in any Ordinance 'in my life.

'After which I apprehended greater loveliness 'in that way, and took great delight in the me-'thods of her Worship and Service; and in pro-'cess of time came acquainted with a religious 'and experienced Christian of that persuasion, '(Daughter to a Minister of great Learning and 'Piety) whom I desired in marriage, to the end 'I might gain the greater advantage of finding 'out the truth between both parties, which I 'will cleave unto by the help of God.

By my Wifes Father after Marriage, I was al-'so abundantly fortified in my present Judgment, 'and by him absolutely convinced of sin, if *I* 'should unite my self to such unlawful Assemblies, '(as he termed them,) which *I* found my self guil-'ty of, though *I* took no notice of it to him all 'the while *I* was in the Country.

'And being convinc't that *I* sin against God by 'an unlawful joyning, and making my self of a 'party with those who make a disturbance and 'division in the Church of God, out of a pretence 'of more purity; doing evil, that good may 'come of it: *I* think verily, *I* am bound in Con-'science to serve God according to the way of 'the Church of *England*, as it is by Law estabi-'shed; which *I* apprehend that *I*, and every ho-'nest man may do without sin, but not so, the 'other way for these reasons.

First, Because Obedience is better than Sacri-'fice; Disobedience, and Rebellion, are as the 'sin of Witchcraft, and stubbornness is as Iniqui-'ty, and *Idolatry*.

All

'All Obedience is comprehended under these 'two, *viz.* our Obedience unto God, and our 'Obedience unto Man; and indeed our Obedience 'unto Man is but our Obedience to God him-'self.

'Now that which we ought to know, is what 'men we ought to obey, and how far, and in 'what things they are to be obeyed.

'The Men we are commanded to honour, and 'obey, and be subject unto, are all our Superi-'ours, especially such as are above us in Church, 'and State.

'*Be subject to every Ordinance of Man for the* 'Lords sake, *whether it be to the King as Supream,* 'or other inferiour Magistrates and Ministers; and 'we must needs be subject not only for wrath, but for 'conscience sake; for God hath ordained such per-'sons to be, and he that resisteth the Ordinance of God, 'shall receive to himself Damnation; all which is 'abundantly evident from 1 Pet. 2. 12, 13. Titus '3. 1, 2. Rom. 13. all the beginning of the 'Chapter.

'But the great question is, *how far, and in what* 'things they are to be obeyed?

'It is true we must *obey them in the Lord, and* 'if they command us any thing which God hath 'forbidden; then must come in that of the Apo-'stle, *Whether it be better to obey God, or Man,* 'judge ye?

'A power they have from God to command, 'for the decent regulating, and ordering of 'Affairs, as well in the Church, as in the State: '*Let all things be done decently, and in order.*

'This Power you claim in your Assemblies, and 'account it great Disobedience in any Member to

'con-

'contradict your commands, which tend to the 'well-ordering and governing of them: And 'may not the King, and others in Authority, 'who have the rule over us, be obeyed as well as 'you.

'There is no Church in the World, (yours not 'excepted,) but doth practice things never com-'manded in the word of God.

'God hath not determined every thing that is 'to be done in matters of Religion, but hath left 'many things to the discretion of them he hath 'set over us; and it is a Soul-damning sin to 'live in contempt of their Authority.

'There is nothing in the Church of *England*, 'but what tends greatly to the promoting of 'Holiness, and advancing the Glory of the Lord, 'by bringing into our thoughts much matter for 'holy Contemplation.

'God requires the *heart principally* in all our 'Services, yet notwithstanding he commands us '*to glorifie him with our bodies also*: Wherefore '*Kneeling at the Lords Supper* (though you say it 'is but Image worship) is a most *befitting gesture*, 'for Creatures to use when they have so nearly 'to do with their Lord Creator, and can be no 'more Image-worship, than sitting or any other 'gesture, but by many nice logical Arguments, 'you would make that sin which is no sin, to justi-'fie your dividing the Church of Christ; and 'that which is sin, when it serves for your pur-'pose you make no sin.

'I greatly wonder that sitting at the Lords 'Supper, which is no more commanded by Christ 'than kneeling, should be cried up by you, as a 'duty absolutely necessary to a right receiving;

'And

'And yet the Lords Prayer which is commanded 'by Chriſt to be prayed, ſhould be ſo much cried 'down, as not fit for this more full diſpenſation 'of the Goſpel.

'If you are got ſo high above the Lords Pray-'er, as to think it none of your Duty to ſay it; 'twill be no marvel if at length, you get above 'all other Ordinances of our Lord Jeſus Chriſts 'appointment.

''Tis not all the Logick and Rhetorick in the 'World, that can diſſwade me from that which 'is ſo plainly commanded, and make me partial 'in my Obedience. Though you may blind the 'eyes of others, yet I hope by the diſtinguiſhing 'Grace of God, you ſhall never be able to blind 'mine.

'It is not any prejudice againſt you, or any 'member of yours, that enclines me to ſeparate 'from you; but love to God, and to my own 'Soul, by apprehending my Sin, and my danger 'while I continue with you.

'A Univerſal Obedience, (which is the only 'true Obedience of the Goſpel) is that which I 'labour after, and I find I can never attain it, in 'any ſeparate Church this day in *England*: and 'this I am ſure is reaſon enough to juſtifie me in 'what I have done.

'*Diſobedience, is as the ſin of Witchcraft, and* 'creates all *differences, debates, ſtrifes, envyings* '*and evil ſpeaking, one of another*; which, how 'contrary to the Goſpel of Chriſt, Judge ye?

'Stubborneſs and obſtinacy, in ſuch wayes of 'Diſobedience, is great iniquity, and Idolatry, 'and doubtleſs will bring down great Judgments 'if not timely repented of and forſaken.

'And

'And being convinc't of all these sins by hold-'ing communion with you, what doth it call for 'but deep Humiliation? The Lord humble, and 'pardon me, in what I have done amiss in this 'matter, and grant me his special grace, that for 'the future, I may live to his Glory, and lead a 'holy and conscientious Life, in the way of the 'Church of *England*, to the end of my dayes, '*Amen.*

These are the reasons for which I desire to be dismist in peace; If you can offer any more weighty, and send them to me in writing, I shall thankfully receive them, and do accordingly so far, as God, and my conscience will give leave.

I beg your Prayers, (though I cannot sit down amongst you with comfort, and peace) that I may not lye under any temptation; for hitherto I have declared only what hath lain with weight upon my Spirit.

I had come my self to wait upon you, but I knew it would not be to as much purpose as this present writing; and now I live in hope to hear from you, who am,

Date Feb. 22, 168⅞

Your loving Friend, *J. Jones.*

At the delivery of this Letter, I discovered my resolution of departing to some of the brethren (unless I could receive satisfaction to those doubts and scruples I lay under) which occasioned strong debates 'twixt me and them: to whom I read it; desiring them to deliver it Mr. *Lobb.*

For which Letter's sake, *I* was censured extreamly, and represented to many of the Brethren and others, as an Apostate from the Truth, and

and a very malicious, cenſorious Perſon, whoſe Hipocriſie was now made manifeſt.

The chiefeſt inſtrument in this work, (who confeſſed he knew not what was in the Letter, but by hear-ſay) within a few dayes after the delivery of it came to my houſe, to know the reaſons of my departing from them, and of writing ſuch a cenſorious Letter.

As for my departing, I told him, it was *for Conſcience ſake*, leaſt *I* ſhould be found guilty of reſiſting the Higher Powers, which ſin God hath threatned with Damnation, *Rom.* 13. 3.

But as for writing a cenſorious Letter, I deny'd my having cenſured any one of them.

I only accuſed and condemned my ſelf therein for thoſe faults which *I* really thought my ſelf guilty of, and if their Conſciences did accuſe them of the ſame faults they muſt not blame me for writing, but themſelves for doing amiſs.

He was very free in reproaching the Church, and me for adhering to it; ingenuouſly acknowledging, that in a Publique Meeting, where they held Conference together, *I* was the ſubject of their diſcourſe: wherein they did unanimouſly declare that *I* was in a moſt wretched eſtate and condition; for departing from the true Worſhip of God.

I laboured to convince him to the contrary, and told him *I* had a great deal of peace and comfort in what *I* had done, and did reſolve (by the Grace of God) to go on as *I* had begun, and thereby fulfil the will of God, plainly appearing in his Holy Word.

Yet all this while *I* was troubled to think, that *I* was brought upon the publique Stage, and become

become a Town-talk, through the indecent clamours of cenſorious Perſons, who quickly ſpread it abroad, not only throughout the Congregation, but among others alſo, whereby it was carried to my deareſt Relations, to whom *I* was repreſented as a moſt wicked, abuſeful Creature, fall'n from whatever was good.

Before whom *I* durſt not appear till *I* had contrived a way to take off that aſperſion, which occaſioned their diſpleaſure againſt me: But this only by the way the full account of it, is reſerved for its proper place.

Some conſiderable time after this, I went again to Mr. *Lobb*, being ſtill willing to hear all that could be alledged againſt me for leaving them to hold Communion with the Church of *England*.

And he lay'd down this for an aſſertion, *That every Believer is inveſted with a Power of chooſing his own Paſtor*; and he did not queſtion, when he had proved it from Scriptural Arguments, (ſince I was willing to imbrace Truth,) but that I ſhould be convinc't of the evil of what I had done.

Though at that time, either he could not, or would not undertake the work.

He did moreover greatly blame me for cenſoriouſneſs in writing the laſt Letter; and ſaid, That the relational Duties incumbent on him as a Paſtor, did induce him to do all he could for my good.

He alſo demanded the reaſon why I forſook them, and what fault I found, which induced me to break that ſolemn Covenant I had ingaged in, to live together with them according to the Order of the Goſpel.

Say-

Saying that I must accuse them justly of imposing something upon me, not warranted from the Word of God, before I could with a safe conscience separate from them.

I gave him clearly to understand that the sole reason of my separating, was, because I could not abide in their Communion without being guilty of, and living in a wilful, and known sin of disobeying the Higher Powers in things that were lawful, and no way contrary to the Word of God, and consequently not sinful: The Word of God being the Rule for Sin, as well as Duty.

I told him it was as much Superstition to make *that sin, and hurtful to mans Salvation, that God made not so in his Word, by forbidding it*; as it was to make *that Duty, and of necessity to Salvation, which he had not expressly commanded.*

The Ceremonies of the Church are in themselves *indifferent*, and may be used without sin, or let alone; but being appointed by the *Magistrate*, it becomes as much *Duty* to obey them, as our Parents in any thing which they command us.

But Mr. *Lobb* still affirmed, *That a Believer ought to choose his own Pastor, notwithstanding the Magistrate forbid him, and that when this choice was freely and voluntarily made, no command of the Magistrate could make it void.*

This he promised to make out in writing to satisfie my self, and others of the Church of *England*, that did oppose the same, which made me long till it were done, supposing I should receive Arguments that were invincible: But it appeared otherwise, notwithstanding the unreasonable deal of time he took up to do the same.

More-

Moreover I took great care to visit the most eminent of the Congregation to assure them, that though I had chang'd my Opinion, yet I would never alter in Love and Affection to them, as Christians, with whom I had many sharp disputations, being able to vindicate the Church of *England*, and justifie my self against whatsoever they could alledge.

About the same time one lent me a Book, call'd *The Harmony between the Antient and Modern Nonconformists*, which gives the reasons why they separate from the Establisht Religion, which I believe are convincing to many sincere Christians amongst them, who (crediting all that their Teachers say, without throughly examining the matter) are deceived.

In giving my Judgment and Sence of those Reasons, I writ in the Margent of the Book, enough to convince any moderate Man of the great insufficiency of those pleas to justifie Separation.

Another of them lent me a Book, call'd the *Counterplot for Union*; wherein he did not question but I would find unanswerable Arguments for Separation, the greatest part of which Book was made by Mr. *Lobb*.

In the Preface he endeavours to represent the Bishops as the Kings greatest Enemies, which looks like a design of setting them at variance, and breeding contention in the Civil State.

In the first page of the Book, he represents the Dean of St. *Pauls*, as the Author of a design to bring in Popery.

In speaking of the Promoters of the said Design, together with the Author it self, he expresses himself thus.

'That

'That the Author of the *Defence of the Dean*, 'with ſome others, did vehemently carry on the 'Deſign, which was ſeemingly but begun by Dr. '*Stilling fleet*.

And in the middle of the Book he labours to repreſent the Church of *England* Schiſmatical, and the Governours thereof Schiſmaticks.

But his inſinuations would not take place, and when I diſcovered my apprehenſions of the Book to my friend that lent it me, I did it in this manner.

A Letter to one of Mr. Lobb's *Church.*

Dear Friend,

'I Have read your Book throughout, and had 'brought it home e're this, but that I have a 'Friend (of very great Judgment and Piety,) 'whom I am desirous should peruse it, if it may be 'permitted. I will keep it my self till Saturday, 'and if I hear nothing from you to the contrary, 'in that time I will then presume to lend it.

'I know you are desirous to understand my sen- 'timents of it, and to tell you the real truth, '(according to my apprehension) I think Mr. '*Lobb* hath performed his part, (as well as the 'rest) most Ingeniously.

'Especially I approve of the propoſals that are 'made for Union, and beg with all my heart 'that God would encline our Superiours, to make 'such overtures for peace, that would be grateful 'to Dissenters, and I doubt not, but that there 'are many among them, forward enough to pro- 'mote such a design.

'I have great reason, (more than common 'Charity) to believe, that many among Dissen- 'ters belong to Christ; and I have the same rea- 'son to conclude as much of many of the Church 'of *England*, besides the many Societies of young 'men in this City, that forsake not the Assemb- 'ling themselves together, to provoke unto love 'and good works; who conscientiously practi- 'cing such things that are appointed by the Church,

'Church, do glorify God abundantly, and com-
'fort, and edifie one another.

'As for my part, (whatever you, or the reſt
'of my Brethren may judge of me) God knows
'the uprightneſs of my heart; that for no other
'reaſon, than for that of Conſcience, I have left
'your Communion, being throughly convinc't,
'that I cannot continue amongſt you without
'ſin.

'I am very ſenſible where *the ſtreſs of the contro-*
'*verſie* lyes, between one party, and the other:
'Some are under ſtrong Convictions that the
'terms of Communion impoſed are ſinful terms,
'wherefore they cant comply with them: Others
'think they are not ſo, for where there is no
'Law prohibiting, there is no Tranſgreſſion;
'(which Mr. *Lobb* obſerves in Page 79, to be Je-
'ſuitical Doctrine, but it muſt not be eſteemed
'falſe, becauſe they hold it any more than the
'Doctrine of the Trinity.)

'Further they add, That whether *the Terms*
'*impoſed be ſinful, or not in themſelves, yet to thoſe*
'*that eſteem them as ſuch, they are ſinful*; And this
'is the reaſon they can't comply with them.

'I am perſwaded you believe in your heart,
'that the *Croſs* after Baptiſme, *and kneeling* at the
'Lords Supper is ſinful, (which are the Terms of
'Communion with the Church of *England*) there-
'fore you cannot conform, unleſs you do that
'which you believe to be ſinful; this I know is
'made a great reaſon for Separation.

'But ſuppoſe you were under ſome doubts and
'ſcruples, whether thoſe *Terms* were *ſinful*, or
'*no*; (for I believe you will grant it is your du-
'ty to conform, if you could do it without ſin)

'*To obey our Superiours*, you know is *a Duty*, the 'other you are not certain whether it be *Sin*, 'or *no*.

'I demand therefore, whether you ought to 'neglect a *known Duty*, to avoid that which you 'fear *is sin*, but possibly may prove otherwise: A 'scrupled and uncertain *sin*, ought not to stand in 'competition with *a known Duty*.

'This is my case; once I was afraid that *kneel-* 'ing at the Lords Supper, and the *Cross* were sin, 'because I supposed them to be *parts of the* 'Worship of God; but they being *nothing so*, I am 'satisfied they are no *sinful Terms of Communi-* 'on, and by your own Opinion I ought to con- 'form: It is the Will of God I should conform; 'and if I will be faithful to the Covenant I made 'at my first joyning with you, I must conform; 'for the Gospel rule, (which I promised then to 'keep close unto) will not admit of Disobedience 'to the least Commandement.

'In the Church of *England* the Word of God 'is truly Preached, and the Sacraments are right- 'ly Administred.

'I am commanded by my Superiours to con- 'form, and I find after diligent search, and im- 'portunate request to God, I can do it with a '*clear Conscience*; the Terms that are imposed, 'as the *conditions* are not *sinful*, but such *as are* '*adapted, and fitted for decency, and the better dis-* 'posing the mind for the service of God.

'I love Mr. *Lobb*, and all of his Society, as I 'hope they belong to God; yet I love not every 'thing practiced by them, *viz.* Their exposing 'the Church of *England* to reproach, and con- 'tempt: This is a great sin you are guilty of,

'and

'and can't deny it, when you ſpeak truth; and 'I believe this is the reaſon why God doth pro-'long the calamities which the Diſſenters labour 'under; for if they did only pray earneſtly to 'God, waiting with Humility; it would haſten 'their deliverance from all the preſſures they lye 'under; but ſince they are ſo paſſionate againſt 'their Brethren, and ſo impatient in themſelves, 'it is but juſt with God, to continue his chaſtize-'ments upon them.

'Never ſeek to juſtifie and clear your ſelves of 'this charge, for it doth appear abundantly to be 'true by the overt acts of it.

Firſt, 'In the Paſtors, among whom I may 'rank Mr. *Lobb* in the front.

Secondly, 'The peoples ſpitting their venome 'againſt the Church, diſcovers the ſame, who 'are guilty, ſome more, and ſome leſs.

'What reproach and contempt do the Paſtors 'caſt upon the Church? by repreſenting her to be 'a great Enemy to Chriſt, and his true Religion, 'but a friend to Antichriſt, and the Religion of 'the Pope.

'That the Church of *England* is thus expoſed 'to contempt by the Paſtors, and particularly, 'by Mr. *Lobb*; ſee *the Modeſt Inquiry*, where the 'good and pious Dr. *Stillingfleet*, (that perfect 'Enemy to Popery) is impeacht of doing what 'advances Popery; and in the very firſt page of 'the *Counterplot*, he makes him the Author of a 'deſign to bring in the Pope, which how true, 'God knows, and how unlikely Mr. *Lobb* himſelf 'knows; however, he was pleaſed thus to 'judge, and write.

'And he doth not expoſe the Doctor ſingly, 'but the whole Church to great contempt, by tak-'ing advantage of ſome notions of the Author of 'the *Defence*; which he ſaith are contrary to the 'Proteſtant Doctrine, contained in the Thirty 'Nine Articles; and then triumphing in his Con-'queſt over the Church, calls her Schiſmatical, 'and the Governours thereof Schiſmaticks; and 'all this he hath moſt cunningly caſt about, tore-'preſent the Church odious, yet to put it off from 'himſelf, as plainly appears by comparing page 'the 80, 81, 82. with page 83.

'Though Mr. *Lobb* doth diligently enquire in-'to the nature and tendency of the ſins of his Ad-'verſaries, yet I am afraid he never ſeriouſly con-'ſidered the evil of this.

'Theſe are things that perpetuate the Diviſi-'ons of the Church, and God will viſit for them, 'and withhold the deſired mercy, till they are 'better diſpoſed to receive it.

'Till theſe janglings are lay'd by, and the Diſ-'ſenters have a better Opinion of the Confor-'miſts, and they of the Diſſenters, (which theſe 'things lead not unto.) I am afraid we ſhall have 'no union, till there is greater peace in the Pul-'pit, and in the Preſs, and in the Communica-'tions of Chriſtians, there can be little Union 'expected.

'When ſuffering perſons are moſt active, and 'buſie to deliver themſelves, and to vindicate 'their own cauſe; God ſtands off, lets them a-'lone, that they may ſee how weak the Arm of 'Fleſh is, yet laying aſide their own Devices, 'and carnal Reaſonings, humbly ſeeking to God 'alone for Deliverance: He will ariſe, and 'make

'make his ſtrength appear in their weakneſs, for 'in the Mount the Lord is ſeen.

'Theſe things Mr. *Lobb* hath preached to o-'thers, and it were well, if ſome others would 'preach the ſame to him again: This is but a 'hint of much that might be ſaid.

'Think not that I do hereby rail at Mr. *Lobb*, 'or any other Diſſenters; I only deſire every one 'to ſearch after their own ſins, and be ſenſible of 'the evil thereof, as God grant I may be of mine.

'I will enlarge no further, only beg of God to 'give us all a right underſtanding in all things; 'and ſo remain

May the 10th. 1682. Your Loving Friend, *J. Jones.*

After I had ſent this Letter to my Friend, and ſaw that no Anſwer would be returned, I went to ſee Mr. *Lobb* again, to deſire him not to forget what he had promiſed, (to produce good Arguments from Scripture to prove, *That every Believer was inveſted with a power from Chriſt to chuſe his own Paſtor*,) which nevertheleſs he neglected; and I being impatient, writ to him this following Letter.

Part of another Letter to Mr. Lobb.

Kind Sir,

'I Hope you will be pleaſed to take this in good 'part, which is but to put you in remem-'brance of the promiſe which you made me, 'when I was with you laſt.

'As to matter of Fact, for which I am accuſed 'of my Brethren, I'le ſay not much, but let the 'righteous God the Judge of all, and the Diſ-'cerner of all Hearts, judge between me, and 'them, to whom I can appeal with comfort 'and rejoycing, that he knows the integrity of 'my Heart in this matter; that a great ſence of 'Duty engageth me to cleave unto the *Church of* '*England*, and fear of ſinning againſt him, in 'theſe following particulars.

Firſt, '*God hath commanded Obedience to Magi-*'*ſtrates in lawful things, and it is ſin to Diſobey.*

'The Magiſtrate requireth nothing, but what 'I believe in my Conſcience is lawful and good.

'Therefore it is ſin in me to diſobey the Ma-'giſtrate, who requireth a Conformity to the 'Government which is eſtabliſhed by Law.

'When I conceive good and wholſome Laws 'are made, (by which I ought to be governed, 'and I ſhould ſet light by them, continuing to do 'what is contrary thereunto,) that do no way 'interfere with the Laws of God; may I not then 'be ſaid to deſpiſe Government? Yet ſurely.

'And

'And this is my case, A sin it is which God 'hates, and hath threatned; therefore I ought 'to separate, rather than sin, which is according 'to your own principle.

Secondly, God hates Divisions among Chri- 'stians; and those especially that continue or 'increase them in word, or deed. And as to my 'own particular, I conceive, that while I conti- 'nue a Member of a Church that is not confor- 'mable to the Government which God hath set 'over us; I do all that time, by my example, 'and practise help to continue the Divisions.

'For which reason I had rather be of St. *Paul*'s 'mind, to become all things to all men; so far 'as I may without sin, rather than contribute 'any thing to Christian Divisions, by insisting on 'every punctilio, which I, and perhaps some 'few more) may not think convenient.

'God commands to mark those that cause Di- 'visions; and really I have impartially conside- 'red the rules to find out the faulty Divider, and 'the Schismatick: And pray don't say that I 'am censorious, if I do think verily that they do 'return upon your own Head accidentally.

'The Lord grant that you, and I may sincere- 'ly study Peace, Union, and Conformity; so 'far as we may do it without sin: This is, and 'shall be my practice; and if it seem evil to you, 'do what you please, and so will I.

Thirdly, 'I cant continue, while I am of your 'Communion without sin; because I shall break 'all the Vows and Promises I made to God, and 'my Brethren, of endeavouring to avoid every '*known Sin, and to perform every known Duty; and* '*of walking according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus* 'Christ *in all things.* 'There

'There is nothing in the Church of *England*, 'that any way obſtructs the great deſign of the 'Goſpel, which is ſtrict Holineſs manifeſted in an 'Univerſal Obedience to all the Commands of 'God.

'I long to hear how you can make out that 'which you promiſed, which if you cannot do 'with great clearneſs of reaſon; your blaming 'me for what I have done, will be moſt unreaſo-'nable.

'For when I do really approve of a thing, and 'find it lawful, and am obliged to the practice 'of it, by thoſe whom God hath ordained: What 'ſtrange wickedneſs would it be in me to reſiſt 'the Ordinance of God? And how juſtly ſhould I 'deſerve Damnation.

'Howbeit, ſince a plain commanded Duty is 'here neglected, and I have engaged by Covenant 'to perform it; I will pay my vows unto the 'Lord, and that in the preſence of all his Saints.

'And whatever ſome may think of me, God is 'my Judge, and the lifter up of my head.

'I will inlarge no further at this time, but 'once more deſire you will not forget me, who 'am

June the 17th. 1682. Your Loving Friend, *J. Jones.*

In a ſhort time after this, he did draw up his Arguments, which are as followeth.

Mr.

Mr. Lobb's *Arguments.*

'WHether according to the Scriptures, every Believer is inveſted with a right 'of choſing his own Paſtor?

'For the clearer underſtanding the import of 'this queſtion, it muſt be premiſed.

Firſt, 'That an Anſwer to this Query is deſired 'for the ſatisfaction of one, who being a Mem-'ber of the viſible Catholick Church, did contra-'ry to the Command of the Magiſtrate make 'choice of a Paſtor; whence the Inquiry is, whe-'ther in ſo doing he did but exerciſe that right, 'with which God hath inveſted him, and of 'which no Humane Authority can juſtly deprive 'him.

Secondly, 'That this right of chooſing his 'own Paſtor, is not meant an ordaining him to 'that Office, but the chooſing one who is ſup-'pos'd to be according to the Rule of the Goſ-'pel, competently qualified for, and to be, if 'not already actually ordained unto the Office of 'a Paſtor.

'Neither doth this right of chooſing interfere 'with the Magiſtrates, or Patrons right of diſ-'poſing their Tythes and Temples; for though 'this their own choice of a Miniſter for them-'ſelves muſt be conſidered in contradiſtinction 'to the choice of Magiſtrates or Patrons for 'them, yet not in contradiſtinction to the Magi-'ſtrates diſpoſal of Tithes.

'Tis acknowledged that the people have no 'right to diſpoſe of that which is the property of

'of another, and that therefore thoſe Tithes and 'Temples which belong to the Magiſtrate and 'Patron, are not to be obtained for the incou-'ragement of the Miniſters, choſen by the peo-'ple any otherwiſe, then as it ſhall pleaſe the 'Magiſtrate or Patron to beſtow them.

Thirdly, 'That the Right or Liberty the peo-'ple have to chooſe for themſelves, is eſteemed 'Divine, and not meerly Humane.

'That the people ſometime had a right of choo-'ſing their own Miniſters, even in the Primitive 'Times, cannot but be acknowledged by all, 'whether Church of *England* Divines, or *Papiſts*.

'*Whitgift* himſelf, who ſo much oppoſes the 'peoples right, do's confeſs, That from the 'Apoſtles days, untill *Cyprians* time, and after; 'the peoples conſent was required in the appoint-'ing of Miniſters.

'And *Bellarmine*, who expreſſes himſelf very 'full on this point, do's grant, That ſometimes 'the people had a right to chooſe their own Pa-'ſtor.

'But the great Query is, Whether this Right 'be Divine, or Humane; unto which *Bellarmine*, 'in oppoſing the Proteſtants, ſuch as *Luther*, '*M. Illiricus*, *Brentius*, *Chemnitius*, and the Prote-'ſtants in *France* and *Holland* do's aſſert, That 'the Right the people ſometimes had to chooſe 'their own Miniſter, was not Divine, but by 'connivance, or conceſſion of the Popes: So '*Bellarmine* de Clericis, lib. 1. c. 7. *Jus eligendi 'ſummum pontificem caterosq; Eccleſiæ Paſtores & 'Miniſtros, non convenit populo Jure Divino, ſed ſi-'quid aliquando in hac re populus potuit, id totum ha-'buit, ex Conniventia, vel Conceſſione Pontificum.* (i. e.)

'The

'The right of chooſing the Pope, or any other 'Paſtors or Miniſters of the Church, doth not 'belong to the people (*jure divino*) but if at any 'time the people had any concern in the choo-'ſing Miniſters, it was either by the connivance 'or grants of the Popes, it was of Humane right 'only.

'To the ſame purpoſe *Whitgift* in his Defence 'of the Anſwer. *p.* 164, *&c.* argues, Who tho' 'he grants that even in the Apoſtles days, (as 'has been already obſerved) this kind of Electing 'Miniſters by the People, was, yea, and is very 'profitable, and expedient too; yet it was not 'of Divine Right, but alterable as time and oc-'caſion ſerveth.

'This premiſed concerning the true ſtate of 'the Queſtion, I anſwer in the Affirmative, 'Namely, That every Chriſtian, according to 'the Word of God is inveſted with a Right of 'chooſing his own Paſtor, (*i. e.*) The Right the 'People have, is of God; and conſequently not 'alterable by any Humane Power or Authority 'whatſoever. Though antecedent to a peoples 'making their choice the Counſel or Advice of a 'Magiſtrate or Patron may be of uſe in their 'making it, yet the Command of a Magiſtrate 'can't juſtly deprive the people of ſuch a Right, 'nor nullifie their choice, when once made of 'one who is competently qualified according to 'the Rule of God's Word.

'For the proof of this, I need not addreſs my 'ſelf to any, but thoſe great Reformers, who in 'oppugning the Papiſts, have furniſhed us with 'many an Argument, as well as with ſufficient 'replyes to all thoſe feeble Objections which

'have

'have been urg'd by the Papists against the peo-
'ples Right.

'For 'tis evident enough to the Learned, that 'as this has been of old, a Controversie between 'Papists and Protestants, even so those of the 'Church of *England*, who have opposed the Peo-'ples Right, have fetcht all their Arguments out 'of the Papists Store-House; and it must be also 'acknowledged, that the Nonconformists can 'offer but little in the defence of the Peoples 'Right, but what they find in the Writings of 'the great Reformers.

'But before I proceed to the confirmation of 'what I assert, 'tis expedient that I beseech the 'Reader to consider, That if the Peoples Right 'be fully proved from the Scriptures, it must be 'acknowledged to be of God, and not alterable 'by any Law of Man.

'*Argument* First, Which is taken from that 'Obligation every Believer is under, of endea-'vouring his own Edification.

'If it be the Duty of every Believer or Chri-'stian to use those means for his own Edificati-'on, which he is fully convinc't are most proper 'and suitable: He has a right to choose his own 'Minister.

'This is easily evinced to any that will but im-'partially consider, That Ministers, even Pastors 'and Teachers are given to the Church for this 'very end, namely, the perfecting the Saints, 'and the edifying the Body of Christ; *Eph.* 4. 8. '11, 12, &c. They are the Instruments ordain-'ed of God for the helping on the Salvation of 'the Elect, and the Joy of Believers; 2 *Tim.* '2. 10. 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. 'Tis the Ministry of the

'Word

'Word that is the great means ordained of God 'for our Edification, and the more ſutable a 'mans Miniſtry is to this or the other Chriſti- 'an, the more edifying it will be unto him, (*i. e.*) 'the more ſutable means it will be for his Edifi- 'cation.

'It muſt be duly noted, that there are variety 'of capacities among Chriſtian people, and an- 'ſwerable thereunto a variety of gifts among Mi- 'niſters; every gift, and every Miniſter with 'his gifts being very uſeful for that work for 'which the gifts are adjuſted.: 1 *Cor.* 12. But on 'the account of the various capacities of the peo- 'ple, and the different gifts of Miniſters, the 'Miniſtry of every individual Paſtor that is com- 'petently enough qualified, for that work is not 'a ſutable means for the Edification of all ſorts of 'Hearers: The gift of the Miniſter muſt be ſui- 'ted to the capacity of the Hearer, or otherwiſe 'the gift will not edifie that Hearer. This be- 'ing ſo, it does neceſſarily follow, that as the 'Miniſtry is the great mean appointed of God for 'the Edification of the people, even ſo the 'Miniſtry of that man who is moſtly ſuted to 'the capacity of this particular Chriſtian, 'is moſt profitable, and edifying unto him: 'And therefore if it be the Duty of every Chri- 'ſtian to uſe thoſe means for their Edification, 'which they are convinced are moſt ſutable: 'Tis their Duty to chooſe their own Miniſter, 'for a ſutable Miniſtry is an edifying means, 'yea, and the more ſutable a mans Miniſtry is to 'my capacity the more proper and ſutable means 'it will be for my Edification, and ſuch as muſt 'be choſen; 'tis Duty, and if Duty, ſurely ſeeing

every

'every man has a right to discharge his Duty: 'Every Christian has so much a right to choose his 'own Pastor, that no Command of any Magi- 'strate whatsoever can justly deprive him of it.

'But 'tis the Duty of every Christian to use 'those means for his own Edification, which he 'is fully convinc't are most proper and sutable.

'That this is so, is fully confirm'd by a multi- 'tude of Scriptural considerations.

'All those Scriptures which make it the Duty of 'Believers to endeavour the perfecting the Salva- 'tion of their Souls, do sufficiently evince it Duty 'to use all those means that are most proper, and 'best suted for Edification: 'Tis the Duty of eve- 'ry Christian to use not only means, but the most 'proper means for the Salvation of his own 'Soul, of which no Magistrate or Patron can be; 'the man himself only is the most competent 'Judge: For God has made us rational Crea- 'tures, has given us understanding faculties, and 'expects we should make use of them. We are 'not to proceed blindly in matters of Religion, 'wherein God's Glory, and the Salvation of the 'Soul is concerned; but must consider that we do 'act like men discreetly. Consider, (*i. e.*) weigh 'well what I say, and the Lord give you under- 'standing in all things, says the Apostle 2 *Tim.* '2. 6. again, 1 *Cor.* 10. 15. I speak unto wise 'men, judge ye what I say, which is sufficient to 'demonstrate, that it is the Duty of every Belie- 'ver in the using means for his own Edification, 'to exercise his Judgment in discerning between 'thing and thing, between one mean, and ano- 'ther, and to do what he is convinc't is most pro- 'per, and advantagious to his Soul: The man

'in

'in this caſe muſt act for himſelf, and muſt be ac-
'countable unto God for what he himſelf hath
'done.

'As a Magiſtrates Command will not be a ſuffi-
'cient plea at the laſt day for my neglect of the
'moſt proper means, neither will it now excuſe
'my Omiſſion. I muſt chooſe for my ſelf, tho'
'the Magiſtrate forbids.

'*Argument* the Second. If it be the Duty of
'every particular Chriſtian to try the Prophets
'or Paſtors, and abide by the true, and avoid
'the falſe; he has a right to chooſe his own Pa-
'ſtor, tho' the Magiſtrate forbids. This is obvi-
'ous to a common capacity.

'But it is the Duty of every particular Chri-
'ſtian, to try the Prophets, and abide by the
'true, and avoid the falſe, though the Magiſtrate
'forbids. The confirmation of this I'le give
'from the Scripture, as *Bilſon* Biſhop of *Winche-*
'*ſter* has it.

'We have the Word and Warrant of the Ho-
'ly Ghoſt for that which we ſay: *Believe not eve-*
'*ry Spirit* (*ſays* Bilſon) *but try the Spirits, whether*
'*they be of God, for many falſe Prophets are gone out*
'*into the World.* 1 John 4. 1. Prophets be Teachers,
'and if Teachers, they muſt be tryed before they
'be truſted, then Paſtours muſt be diſcerned be-
'fore they be believed; and by whom trow you,
'but by them that ſhould believe them: that is,
'by their Hearers? The ſame precept our Saviour
'gives to the multitudes that followed him, *Be-*
'*ware of falſe Prophets* (*or Teachers*) *which come to*
'*you in Sheeps-clothing, but inwardly they be ravening*
'*Woolfs, by their fruits ye ſhall know them.* If all
'muſt beware of them, and are taught how to

'know them, then they may lawfully try them 'before they believe them: This wiſdom the 'Lord himſelf commendeth in his Sheep; *My 'Sheep, they hear my voice, and follow me, a ſtran-'ger they will not follow, but fly from him.* John 10. 4, 5.

'If you take judging for diſcerning, as it is of-'ten uſed, the people muſt be Diſcerners and 'Judges of that which is taught. As the Paſtors 'have Authority from Chriſt to preach the 'Truth, and wo be to them that reſiſt the Prea-'chers of Truth: So have all Hearers both Li-'berty and charge to beware of Seducers given 'them by the ſame Lord, and wo be to them that 'do it not. *Take heed*, ſaith our Saviour, *that 'no man ſeduce you, for many ſhall come in my Name, 'ſaying, I am Chriſt, and ſhall deceive many, &c.* 'Matth. 24. Thus far Biſhop *Bilſon*.

'He that requireth all men to receive ſuch as he 'ſendeth, charges all men to avoid ſuch as pre-'tend his Name, when they are not ſent.

'Thus 'tis evident, that 'tis the Duty of the 'people to try the Miniſters or Preachers of 'the Word, and have a right to chooſe ſuch, by 'whoſe Miniſtry they may profit moſt, and muſt 'take heed they be not deceived! This is not 'only their Liberty, their Right, but ſo much 'their Duty, that they ſin, if they do not exer-'ciſe it ſo far as to avoid thoſe who are Seducers, 'wicked and ungodly, *who having but the form of 'Godlineſs, deny the power thereof.*

'This Argument is grounded on ſeveral Texts, 'as underſtood by the old Reformers of the 'Church of *England*; whereby 'tis evident, that 'it is the Duty of every Chriſtian to try, and

'chooſe

'choose for himself, and not the Magistrate to 'choose for him.

'The Third *Argument*. That which was the 'ordinary practice and wayes of the Church in 'the Apostles days, must be considered to be of 'Divine Right, and to be observed by us.

'But the peoples concern in choosing the Offi-'cers in the Church, was an ordinary practice in 'the Apostles dayes, therefore of Divine Right.

'First, That that which was the ordinary pra-'ctice of the Church in the Apostles days, concern-'ing Church Affairs, must be esteemed to be of di-'vine right, and ought to be observed by us, is ma-'nifest from those Scriptural considerations, first, 'that in 1 *Cor.* 4. 17. the Apostle doth put the Church 'of *Corinth* in remembrance of his ways in Christ, 'as he taught every where, in every Church: And 'in 1 *Cor.* 11. 2. He praises the Brethren, that they 'remembred in all things, and held fast the Or-'dinances as he delivered them unto the *Corinthi-'ans*. In like manner he exhorts the *Philippians*, 'ch. 4. 9. Thus *Titus* was to observe the Orders 'of *Paul*, *Titus* 1. 5, &c. As much as if it had been 'said, the ordinary practice of the Apostles is a 'rule for the directing the Churches of Christ in 'after Ages.

'Secondly, The peoples concern in choosing 'the Officers in the Church, was an ordinary 'practice in the Apostles days. This evinc'd by 'an induction of particular instances, wherein 'tis 'plain, that what Officers soever were chosen or 'the service of the Church, the people had some 'concern in their choice.

When I had perused these Arguments, and finding them to be very weak, and slender, not

at all anſwering my expectation, nor what was pretended. I writ this following Letter, in anſwer thereunto.

The Copy of a Third Letter ſent to Mr. Lobb.

SIR,

I Had waited upon you long ere this, had not extraordinary buſineſs prevented me; but neither that, nor diſtance of place can longer confine me from ſignifying to you the thoughts of my Heart. I did receive thoſe papers which you ſent me, wherein you endeavour to prove, That every Believer might chooſe his own Paſtour, notwithſtanding the Magiſtrates forbid him.

I was in hopes you would have brought ſome poſitive Texts *of Scripture to confirm your aſſertion, which you have not: the negative is plain.* Obey them that have the rule over you in the Lord. Obey every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake. *And ſince the Magiſtrates command nothing* in matters of Religion, but what I am really convinc't may be done without ſin; it is my Duty to honour and obey them; to avoid ſeparation, as what I am convinc't is againſt the mind of Chriſt. *All the Arguments you have uſed to prove the point, are as ſo many motives to induce me to cleave to the*

Church

Church of England; *and arguments to confirm me in the equity and juſtice of what I have done hitherto. I ſhall no longer diſpute a Believers right to chooſe his own Paſtor, ſince it is no longer then he is convinc't, that it is the beſt mean* for his Edification. *By this the firſt Argument, it appears that when I am convinc't that another Miniſtry is more edifying, that it is my Duty to make uſe thereof, as what is moſt for my edification; and conſequently ought to change as often as my mind changes. In purſuance of this Argument I may turn* Presbyterian, Anabaptiſt, Papiſt, Quaker, *and what not.*

The Second Argument *is, That ſince all Believers are commanded to try the Prophets and Spirits, whether they be of God, or no; and to reject the falſe, and embrace the true; they have therefore a right of chooſing their own Paſtors, eſpecially ſince Chriſt hath given rules to diſtinguiſh one from the other. I have been diligent, and very wary in this matter, and think thoſe are the true Shepherds of Jeſus Chriſt, who come in by the door into the Sheepfold, and that all others are but Thieves and Robbers: And if it be my Duty to chooſe or refuſe, as I believe, and am convinc't; then I am juſtified in my preſent choice by your own Argument.*

The Third and laſt Argument *was, that the people always, and in the Apoſtles days had ſome concern in the choice of their Miniſter, which I will not go about to deny; but deſire you will be ſo kind to your ſelf, and juſt to me, as to ſuffer me to diſcharge a good conſcience, both towards God, and towards Man; which is my real deſign in abandoning your Miniſtry, and going over to the* Church of England. *And after the moſt diligent enquiry, I really find Conformity to be a* great Duty, and Separation a moſt formidable

ſin: *and thoſe multitudes of* Arguments *you heap up for* Separation, *do with abundance of more Juſtice and reaſon, make for my preſent Juſtification in departing from among you.*

I have ſo much of Scripture and Reaſon on my ſide, that he muſt ſhut his eyes that will not ſee it; I will add no more at preſent, but pray to the Living God for your better Illumination; who am

Your Real Friend
J. Jones.

This was the laſt Letter that I ſent Mr. *Lobb*, to which I received no Anſwer, neither had I any more conference with him, only chancing to meet him one day in a diſguiſe, he ſaid he received my Letter, and would either come and ſee me, or ſend an Anſwer, but performed neither: His Arguments I carried to a worthy Divine, who conſidered them, and writ a very judicious anſwer; which if he would be pleaſed to make publick, might be of great uſe for the ſatisfaction of Diſſenters in that point. Theſe are the moſt remarkable paſſages that happened between me, and 'thoſe that were of the ſame Church that I was joyned unto, by which it appears, that the trouble I met withal was not little, which nevertheleſs to me became a pleaſure: For I took great delight both to give, and receive ſatisfaction.

2. In Conforming, I was not only oppoſed by Mr. *Lobb* and his Congregation, but alſo by my neareſt Relations, till by ſtrength of Argument I did convince them of the neceſſity of ſo doing *in point of Conſcience.* The chiefeſt that *I* was concern'd with in this reſpect, was my Mother and

and Brother, both of them againſt Conformity, and greatly diſpleaſed at me, when they underſtood how I had dealt with Mr. *Lobb* and his Congregation, whom (as they had been informed) I had abuſed in a moſt groſs and wicked manner. Before I durſt venture to ſee them, (having heard that they were much diſpleaſed at me) I thought one effectual way to clear my ſelf, and to recover their favour, was by writing unto them, which I did in this manner following.

Part of a Letter written to my Mother.

Dear Mother,

'I Beſeech you (in all Duty and Submiſſion) by 'the Mercies of God in Chriſt Jeſus, to paſs 'by, and forget all the Offences I have at any 'time committed againſt you, by my unadviſed-'neſs, and indiſcretion. I am very ſenſible that 'I am but a weak and frail Creature, ſubject to ma-'nifold miſcarriages even in the beſt, and chiefeſt 'actions of my Life. This World I find is a 'Wilderneſs, wherein we muſt expect to meet 'with many great and ſurprizing Difficulties, 'and Troubles of various kinds; a large experi-'ence whereof you have had already, and how 'much more you may have, God only knows.

'This is a day of Tryal with me, as well as 'with you and my dear Brother, which requires

'great prudence, meekneſs, patience, and ſelf-'Denyal.

'I have of late, ſince I received my freedom, 'met with greater troubles than moſt are aware 'of, not only in Temporal, but alſo in Spiritual 'Affairs, which I will briefly relate unto you.

'[Here I gave her an Hiſtorical account of the 'methods of God's Providence in working upon 'me ſo great a change, which (becauſe I have al-'ready ſufficiently diſcovered) I will here omit.] 'In times paſt I had as great an averſion to the 'Church, as many among the Diſſenters have, 'and judged it Popiſh, and Antichriſtian, as they 'do; and thought it no harm to vilifie and re-'proach her. *O horrid, and monſtrous wickedneſs!* 'A ſin of a Crimſon dye, as will appear, by ſe-'riouſly conſidering the weight of theſe Argu-'ments.

1. 'If the *Church of England* be a true Church of 'Jeſus Chriſt? (as all moderate Diſſenters grant,) 'then to ſeparate and depart from her Commu-'nion, wherein Chriſt hath not departed, is 'Schiſme.

2. If the *Church of England* be deſpiſed, and ex-'poſed to great infamy and contempt among 'Diſſenters, (which ſhe is by all of them more or 'leſs) it muſt be for ſomething which they charge 'againſt her, that is ſufficient to juſtifie them 'for ſo doing, as well as for ſeparating from her; 'which can never be, unleſs they can prove her '*to be Idolatrous in her Worſhip, or that ſhe teaches 'falſe Doctrine, or makes any of her Ceremonies ne-'ceſſary to Salvation*; none of which her greateſt 'Adverſaries can make out againſt her; theſe on-'ly ſhe makes uſe of to juſtifie her ſeparation from 'the Church of *Rome, viz.* 1. 'Ido-

1. 'Idolatrous Worſhip in the *Adoration of* 'the Hoſt, *Worſhipping of Images*, *Invocation of* 'Saints, &c. the Scripture commands ſeparation 'in this caſe, *Fly from Idolatry.*

2. The *Church of England* doth ſeparate from 'Rome, becauſe of her falſe Doctrines, as *Merit*, 'Indulgences, *Purgatory*, and the *Sacrifice of the* 'Maſs, with many other things, which is *ano-* 'ther Goſpel, than what Chriſt, and his Apoſtles 'taught us; and therefore to be abhorred and 'forſaken.

3. 'The Church of *Rome* makes *humane traditi-* 'ons equal with the Word of God, and things in 'their own nature *indifferent* parts of *Divine* 'Worſhip, *and neceſſary to Salvation*: this is indeed 'to teach for Doctrines, *the Commandements of men*, 'and to ſet up mens inventions by Gods inſtituti- 'ons; mens poſts by Gods poſts; This is indeed 'Superſtition, and rendring the Scriptures an im- 'perfect rule for matters of Worſhip. All theſe 'things the Church of *England* hath wiſely de- 'clined, and avoided; inſomuch that none of 'her Ceremonies are parts of Divine Worſhip, 'but only adjuncts, or neceſſary Appendices that 'are contrived for order, and decency in the 'Service of God, according to the command of 'the Apoſtle, and the Practice of the Primitive 'Chriſtians long before *Popiſh* Innovations were 'introduced or invented, as Eccleſiaſtical Hiſto- 'ries do fully evince.

'The *Adjuncts of Divine Worſhip* (which reſpect 'time, place, geſture and habit) are not deter- 'mined in Holy Scriptures, but left to Humane 'Prudence to appoint under the Goſpel; and 'ought to be obſerved, provided they are not

impoſed

'impoſed as *matters of Faith*, which to refuſe 'then is ſinful. This Power every Paſtour aſ-'ſumes in his Congregation, though they deny 'it to the King, and thoſe that are legally in 'Authority over them, both in Church and 'State.

'How many things do Diſſenters uſe about 'Divine Worſhip which God hath never com-'manded? and they enforce it as a *Duty* on their 'Members from the ſame Scriptures as we do; '*obey them that have the rule over you*; and any 'member that oppoſes the Orders of the Church 'he is of, not thinking himſelf obliged to regard 'them, is accounted carnal, proud, and obſti-'nate; and is there not the ſame parity of rea-'ſon, for the Church of *England* to conclude ſo 'of them, who for no other reaſon leave and 'deſpiſe her?

'We read of ſome in the Apoſtles time, that 'when *falſe brethren* crept into the Church, and 'required the *obſervation of many of the* Jewiſh '*Ceremonies*, as *Circumciſion*, &c. that the Goſpel 'of Jeſus Chriſt might be promoted, the Apoſtle 'ſuffered them to be obſerved, and made no di-'ſturbance in the Church, but ſubmitted, till 'they made them *matters of Faith, and neceſſary* '*to Salvation.* Then he forbids them the Com-'munion of ſuch, and tells them, if *they ſhould be* '*circumciſed Chriſt would profit them nothing*.

'The Church of *England* is ſo far from Idola-'try, that ſhe hates all manner of Superſtition, 'ſuch as is uſed in the Church of *Rome*, and alſo 'among Diſſenters.

'Superſtition is a ſuppoſing that to be well 'pleaſing in the ſight of God, which he hath not

'com-

'commanded, appropriating thereunto an ex-
'traordinary vertue that accrues to ſuch who
'carefully perform the ſame; or Judging that to
'be ſinful, and injurious to the Souls of men,
'which God hath not forbidden in his Holy
'Word.

'Theſe are the two Branches of Superſtition:
'The former of which the Church of *Rome* is
'Guilty in a high meaſure, and the Diſſenters
'have dearly eſpouſed the latter; but the Church
'of *England* hath carefully avoided both.

'Many good Chriſtians conſider not theſe
'things, but fall into Errors, to the great diſ-
'honour of God, as well as the reproach and
'weakening of this Nation, by the moſt unchri-
'ſtian Diviſions that are among us; occaſioned
'by Pride and Ignorance, and probably Cove-
'touſneſs together.

'Hence many blemiſhes, and faults are found
'in the Church, and theſe by the Daughters of
'Pride, Malice and Envy, are magnified to a
'wonderful greatneſs; whereas they ought to
'be extenuated, and covered with the greateſt
'Charity; and all Prudence and Care taken, to
'remove or amend them.

'But contrariwiſe, the Church muſt be rent
'and torn in ſunder, under the pretence of grea-
'ter Purity and Sanctity, and avoiding Super-
'ſtition; And ſo thinking to avoid danger, they
'run themſelves upon the ſpears point; and no
'wonder if diviſions and ſubdiviſions follow
'thereupon.

'A man by purſuing the firſt Principles of
'Separation may run (and if he be faithful, and
'ſincere in the ſaid purſuit ought to run) from
'the

'the Church of *England* to *Presbytery*, thence to '*Independency* and *Anabaptiſme*, and ſo to *Quake-*'*riſme* and what not.

'The *Presbyterians* cannot away with the *Cere-*'*monies of the Church*, becauſe they are of *Humane* '*Appointment*.

'The *Independents* cannot ſubject to the deciſion 'of Synods; becauſe they are humane Deciſions.

'The *Anabaptiſts* cannot believe but Infants 'Baptiſme is a humane Innovation.

'The *Quakers* and others being for greater 'Purity, cannot endure ſet *Forms of Preaching*, 'nor *ſtinting the Spirit with reſpect to time*, with 'many other things, looking upon them as Hu-'mane inventions, and not to be tolerated in the 'Service of God.

'But what ſhall I ſay in this matter? whether 'will not mens Fancies lead them, if they are not 'reſtrained by ſome Law? and what diſorder and 'confuſion, doth follow the breach of good and 'wholſom Laws, and Uniformity in Religion?

'If all Diſſenters were ſo good and wiſe, as to 'cleave heartily to the Church of *England*, how 'happy might we be? which they might do, and 'have power to Exerciſe as ſtrict Diſcipline '(which is all they plead for) as in any of their 'Congregations. But what ſtrange prejudice 'hath corrupted their judgments, and blinded 'their eyes, let all wiſe men Judge.

'As for my part when I conſider the Church of '*England* as to her conſtitution, I cannot but 'give her (as ſhe deſerves) the preheminence of 'the beſt in the World.

'Yet when I ſpeak in her vindication, and 'praiſe; I do not go about to juſtifie all perſons

'that

'that profeſs themſelves of her *Communion*, nor all 'their Practices: But the ſoundneſs of her 'Doctrines and Inſtitutions, which are the 'ſtrongeſt Bulwarks againſt Popery and Super-'ſtition of any in the World; and none hath 'defended the Proteſtant Religion like to thoſe 'noble Champions of her communion.

'Now to judge her *Popiſh* and *Antichriſtian*, or 'no true Church of Chriſt; (as all ſeparation 'from her intimates) is as great a ſin, I am per-'ſwaded, as any under the Sun, next unto the 'ſin of Angels, who being Ambitious of *Inde-'pendency*, became moſt wretched Devils.

'Wherefore, (Dear Mother) conſider I pray 'that ſeparation from the true eſtabliſh'd Church 'is a Sin, and a complicated Sin, of 1. Pride. '2. Uncharitableneſs, or want of true Chriſtian 'Love. 3. Giving Offence. 4. Schiſm. 5. Diſ-'obedience to Magiſtrates in and for the Lord. '6. Diſobedience to the Goſpel, which com-'mands Peace, Unity, Concord, Long-ſuffer-'ing, Forbearance, &c. 7. Superſtition, or 'making that ſin which God hath not made ſo, and if the avoiding of all theſe ſins be not 'ſufficient to juſtifie me in ſeparating from a ſe-'parate Church; I know not what is.

'I doubt not but if you ſearch into the matter 'as well as I, you will find it ſo; if not I beſeech 'you to ſhew me my miſtake and I'le recant.

'But God knows the ſincerity of my heart 'that nothing could have drawn me from the 'communion of Mr. *Lobb*'s People, but the 'apprehenſions of ſinning in the reſpects fore-'mentioned.

'And as for the Information you received of

'my

'my abuſing him and his Congregation, calling 'them Rebels, and Seditious, as ſome have re-'ported. I deny it, 'tis falſe, having no ap-'pearance of Truth in it, further than that I 'ſaid, ſeparate Congregations were unlawful 'Aſſemblies; whatever elſe I ſaid in my Letter 'to Mr. *Lobb* referr'd wholly to my ſelf, with re-'ſpect to the convictions I laid under. Many *I* be-'lieve are apt to think that *I* am become an Apo-'ſtate, a meer caſt away; the Lord grant them 'more Charity the beſt ornament of a Chriſtian. 'God knows, and his Holy Spirit can bear me 'witneſs, that *I* cannot with any peace of Con-'ſcience continue with them; neither am *I* any 'thing the leſs a Chriſtian, but rather more in 'obeying the Will of the Lord, and *I* can with 'comfort reflect upon what *I* have done in this 'matter as to the main; *viz.* my leaving Mr. '*Lobb*, and adhering to the *Church of England* 'which can be no breach of Covenant in me, but 'an effectual performance of it, endeavouring to 'ſtick cloſe to the rule, which Jeſus Chriſt hath 'laid down in Goſpel, which was all I promiſed at 'my Joyning with Mr. *Lobb*, and now endeavour 'to perform to the glory of our dear and bleſſed 'Lord Jeſus, and will through the aſſiſtance of his 'Grace endeavour to do unto the end of my Life.

'To live in wilful Sin, when one is enlightned 'in the knowledge of the Truth, is a dreadful 'thing you know, and this *I* am perſwaded (by 'clear evidence from holy Scripture) is my caſe 'while *I* continued diſobedient to the good and 'wholſom laws of a well eſtabliſhed government 'in which we live.

'Therefore (Dear Mother) *I* do humbly en-

'treat

'treat you, not to paſs any ſevere cenſures upon 'me, but extend that Chriſtian Charity towards 'me, which your ſelf would deſire, were you un-'der the ſame convictions I am.

'I blame none for the Zeal they have of Gods 'Glory, though they do amiſs through many 'Errors and miſtakes they lye under, but do 'pray that God would enlighten them, and 'bring them into the way of Truth.

'I ſhall add no more, but only implore the fa-'vour, and bleſſing of the God, and Father of 'our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to deſcend upon us all, 'to guide us in the way of Unity, and Concord, 'Peace and True Religion; and that he would 'particularly multiply his Mercy upon you, and 'enable you ſtill to continue Motherly Affections 'towards me, who am

Your dutiful and obedient
Son, *T. Jones.*

With this Letter I ſent another to my *Brother*, who had been viſited a long time with ſickneſs and lameneſs, whereof he died the 22th. of *May* following, 1682. which Letter is as followeth;

Dear Brother,

I Had come my ſelf ere this to ſee my Mother and you but that I have been letted partly through indiſpoſition of body, and multiplicity of buſineſs; and partly through fear of appearing to you both while you were raiſed to a paſſion againſt me, through the falſe reports that you have heard, but I deſign God willing

willing ſpeedily to come and viſit you. In the mean while I thought it highly expedient to ſend this meſſenger before-hand to repreſent my caſe unto you, that when I come I may have the leſs Apology to make for my ſelf.

And withal I would earneſtly requeſt you not to be too hot at any time when we ſhould with all meekneſs, love and humility, diſcourſe about matters of Religion: then to be cenſorious and paſſionate (when things occurr not to our ſentiments) is very unchriſtian.

For we are men no longer than we are guided by reaſon, and the wiſeſt of men are the moſt ready to hear reaſon and follow it, though it be to the parting with that which they have moſt dearly eſpouſed when they find it unreaſonable to make a defence.

As I know my ſelf to be a ſinful Creature and ſubject to errour, as well as other Temptations; So I deſire to be reproved in the Spirit of meekneſs, and by arguments from Scripture, and reaſon to be convinced; ſo ſhall I be won, and drawn ſweetly by thoſe cords of Love.

But to be reviled or cenſured, I love not, though I thank God I can bear it without returning the like; yet it grieves me to ſee many good Chriſtians guilty of it, who will not be brought to perceive it by themſelves.

But whatever you or others may think of me, in this I can rejoice, even the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, that whereinſoever I apprehend my ſelf to have done evil I hope I have ſincerly repented of it, and purſue only that which I conceive to be good and acceptable in the ſight of God.

The

The Lord look in mercy down upon you, and enable you diligently to examine into the true cauſe of his contending with you, and help you to anſwer his end therein, that he may return in mercy and hear all our prayers to your health and comfort through Jeſus Chriſt; as prayeth

Your dear and loving Brother
(who is ready and willing to
the uttermoſt of his power to
help you in all your troubles)

J. Jones.

Theſe two Letters anſwered my end ſo well, that when I went to ſee them (contrary to expectation) they had very little to ſay againſt me but what I could eaſily anſwer.

Thirdly, I had divers other Friends and Acquaintance to encounter withal, that were of other Congregations with whom I had many Diſputations and brought ſeveral of them to abate much of their Prejudices againſt the Church of *England*; though others remained as hardened as ever.

Bleſſed be thy holy name, O moſt gracious and merciful Father, for thine infinite goodneſs to this Church which thou haſt in a wonderful manner eſtabliſht amongſt us, and hitherto defended, notwithſtanding the power, policy, and wrath of Rome; *and the envie, and malice of ſome Diſſenters.*

Thy name be magnified for ever who doſt ſend thy Spirit to convince and convert to the Lord Chriſt Jeſus, and who raiſeſt up inſtruments of thy praiſe in

this evil generation, which gives joyful hopes that ſucceeding ages, ſhall ſtand up to exalt thy righteous name.

Oh! That thou who haſt raiſed ſo many heavenly young plants in this thy Vineyard, wouldſt water them continually with thy heavenly grace, cauſing the dew of heaven continually to deſcend upon them, that they may grow and flouriſh and multiply in abundance, throughout all generations, even to the end of the World: And for thine infinite goodneſs to me in particular my ſoul ſhall bleſs thee through Jeſus Chriſt, both now and to all Eternity, Amen.

A Collection of the Reaſons which fully convince me that Conformity is a great Duty.

IT pleaſed the alwiſe God in creating the World, to make man the ſuperiour of all his Creatures here below, by enduing him with a rational Soul, having made him but a degree lower than the Angels of Heaven, Reaſon being all the Image of God which the fall hath left us, by our making uſe thereof, we diſcover our ſelves to be ſuperiour to the Beaſts that periſh. Wherefore he that cannot render a reaſon for what he doth, acteth not like a Man, but like a Brute. And if we ought to render a reaſon for whatever we do, much more ought we to do ſo for things of great moment.

Of all the concerns we are to mind, thoſe that reſpect our Souls are the chiefeſt: And he that knows the worth and value of his Soul, will conſult with reaſon what muſt be done to promote its Eternal Good and Happineſs.

Reaſon will induce a man to do whatever hath a tendency thereunto, and diligently to avoid the contrary. But good Reaſon is not to be found out, but by a diligent ſearch of its oppoſite, comparing things together; my own particular caſe will be a ſufficient demonſtration herein. As for inſtance; In changing my opinion in a concern of my Souls Eternal welfare: I have diſcovered my Reaſons for ſo doing in that Hiſtorical Relation which I have given.

Which I was not able to perform, till I had compared the ſame with thoſe oppoſite Reaſons which before I built upon; whence better reaſon forced me to relinquiſh the former, as is evident enough to all men that will but ſubmit themſelves to the conduct of reaſon. But becauſe thoſe Reaſons are promiſcuouſly interwoven in the ſaid Diſcourſe, they appear not in their full ſtrength, as if they were united together. For which cauſe *I* have made this Collection, with an addition of ſome more; which plainly evince *Conformity to be a great Duty, and Separation a ſin to be avoided by every true Chriſtian amongſt us.* Even Nature it ſelf affords us reaſons for this, as well as Religion; and indeed nothing is more agreeable to Natural Reaſon, than that there ſhould be an unanimous concord, and union among all the perſons of a Family or Country.

For where it otherwiſe happens that Diviſions, and Schiſms do engender, and creep in, it tends to the overthrow, and deſtruction of one, as well as the other. And Religion, it lays a ſpecial Obligation upon the Conſcience to preſerve Union, both in the Church, and in the State: But to be particular, as the caſe doth require: Conformity is a great Duty, as appears from theſe conſiderations taken,

Firſt, From the excellency of *Conformity.*

Secondly, From the great neceſſity of *Conforming.*

Thirdly, From the great benefits that do attend *Conformity.*

Fourthly, From the diſadvantages of refuſing to *conform.*

All

All these a little explained, will abundantly set forth the real beauty and lustre of our Church, which is much eclipsed by those false representations, which the Devil, and man have agree'd to put upon her; and therefore

First of all, I have great reason to conform to the Protestant Religion Established by Law, when I consider the excellency of it, how admirably all its parts are adapted for promoting the great design of the Gospel, which is Holiness in Heart, and Life, in mind, and behaviour.

I dare challenge all our boasting Dissenters to produce the like; for they have clipt off that Glory and Beauty which us'd to adorn Christ's Religion in former days, and made the blind World fall in love with the Worshippers of our Lord Jesus; who behaved themselves wisely towards such as were without; expressing the inward frame of their Spirits by their outward carriage and deportment; according to what the Apostle saith, *Glorifie God with your Bodies, and with your Spirits which are his*, and must therefore both be employed in his Service.

Accordingly the *Church of England* doth act, after the Primitive Institution by our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Blessed Apostles, having purged herself from all those abuses which *Antichrist that man of sin* hath introduced into the Religion of Christ, with respect both to her *Doctrine*, and *Worship*.

Which of all her Adversaries dare attempt to prove her guilty of false Doctrine, hath she not diligently declined all the false Doctrines of the Church of *Rome*, *as Merit*, *Transubstantiation*, *Purgatory*, the *Sacrifice of the Mass*, &c.

Hath she not likewise declined all the Errors of the *Arrians*, *Socinians*, *Pelagians*, and *Antinomians*; and yet notwithstanding, she can hardly have the Name of a Church of Christ, among our great self-admirers.

And as to her *Worship*, hath she not purged out all *Idolatry* and *Superstition*? What *Host* doth she adore? What *Images* or *Idols* doth she worship? What *Angels* or *Saints* doth she *pray unto*? What doth she make *necessary to Salvation*, that God himself hath not commanded? What Church can have greater purity than this? And for Charity so much commended by God himself, what Church can compare with ours?

All these things render her truly amiable, and excellent indeed; and all those that separate from her Communion, declare themselves unworthy of her. There is nothing I know of, that can render a Church really excellent, but this Church abounds therewith, as much as any in the Christian World, and therefore *I* have reason to embrace her Communion, (and decline all others) as being the most excellent of all.

Secondly, Another reason is taken from the necessity of Conforming.

God hath made it my Duty to Conform, and it is a great sin in me, (as well as others) to refuse the same. For this *I* hope to produce better Arguments than Mr. *Lobb* did, to prove, *That a Believer might choose his own Pastor, though the Magistrate forbid him.*

That it is a Duty to conform, (and consequently a sin to separate) will appear plainly.

First, If we consider that to conform is lawful, there is no sin in it, though the Adversaries

of

of our Church have managed this Argument a-againſt us with all the craft imaginable, yet nothing is more evident, than that their Allegations are vain, compar'd to thoſe ſolid Reaſons given by the Noble Worthies of the Church of *England* that have been engaged in that Controverſie. For ſince ſhe hath purg'd out whatever is Idolatrous and Superſtitious, can it be ſin to hold Communion with her? Surely no.

That Religion wherein ſo many Thouſands have been ſaved, in defence whereof many have lay'd down their lives, and moſt readily ſuffered Martyrdom, which is ſo agreeable in every thing to the Word of God, having in it nothing contrary to the ſame: It muſt neceſſarily be lawful to hold Communion with it.

And her Adverſaries diſcover themſelves to be men of a ſtrange temper in denying ſuch an apparent truth; for nothing can be more lawful nor better warranted from the Word of God, and therefore it becomes an indiſpenſible Duty, as is plainly evident from Holy Scriptures, eſpecially if we conſider in the

Second place, Thoſe Commands that are for Peace and Union, where it is ſaid, *Follow Peace with all Men*: And, *As much as in you lyes, live peaceably with all men. Give no offence to the Jew, nor to the Gentile, nor to the Church of God. Above all things have fervent Charity*; This is the chiefeſt Character of a ſincere Chriſtian; for indeed Charity *ſuffereth long*, and *is kind*; it *beareth all things, endureth all things, and covereth a multitude of faults.* And all ſuch as are deſtitute of it, though they pretend to *have all knowledge, to underſtand all Myſteries, to have all Faith, yet the Apoſtle tells us they have nothing.*

Contrary to this Grace of Charity, are all *envyings, evil ſpeaking, ſtrivings, and Diſſentions about words, and things that are indifferent, which the Apoſtles utterly forbid.* Now ſince to remain ſeparate from the Church of *England*, with which it is lawful to hold Communion, is to abandon all Charity, and to diſobey all thoſe precepts, enjoyning peace, concord, humility, *&c.* It appears to be my great Duty to Conform, to live peaceably with my fellow Chriſtians, and as much as is poſſible, to give them no offence; to judge charitably of their actions, and demeanours in their worſhipping and ſerving God; not to cenſure nor rail againſt them, much leſs to ſpeak evil of them, and in all things to comply with them, ſave only where the Scriptures declare it ſinful. Therefore it being a Duty, there is a neceſſity of performing it, which makes it plainly appear, That I have great reaſon to conform.

3. The neceſſity of conforming will further appear in that God hath commanded us to *obey Magiſtrates, and all that are in Authority over us.*

That this is ſo, all men muſt grant; the Scriptures being ſo clear and full, that it is impoſſible to deny it. That the Magiſtrate, and ſuch who are in Authority, do require Conformity is ſufficiently evident; that conformity is lawful, and no way repugnant to the Word of God, has been abundantly proved, and likewiſe confeſt by many of them that ſeparate.

Only that which they object, is, *That many things are required in conforming, which are not expreſly commanded in the Word of God*; (affording Chriſtian Magiſtrates, not ſo great a Power as God affords to Infidels,) and produce the exam-

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ple of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who were deſtroyed for doing *that which God commanded them not*; and the example of the Children of *Iſrael*, who *ſet up their abominations in the Houſe of God, who built again the High places of Baal, and cauſed their Sons and Daughters to go through the fire unto* Molech, *which God commanded them not.* Alas! Theſe things God was ſo far from commanding, that he had forbid them ſo to do before. And beſides, they made it a great part of their Religion, and neceſſary to Salvation, as they did afterwards, *waſhing of hands*, and divers other *ſuperſtitious things*; which became ſo by the ſtreſs they lay'd upon them, and the vertue which they made the people believe was naturally in them, teaching thereby for *Doctrines the Commandements of men*; intimating by ſo doing, that God had omitted ſomething neceſſary to their Salvation, which he had not commanded them.

But what is there in Conformity impoſed, as neceſſary to Salvation, that God hath not commanded in his word? There is nothing that could ever yet be proved to convince any man, that well underſtands what is neceſſary thereunto.

That which is neceſſary to Salvation, is not alterable by any Law of Man: But all thoſe things required in order to Conformity, are alterable, and may be changed as thoſe in Authority ſee cauſe; therefore indifferent, and no way neceſſary to Salvation, ſimply and in themſelves, but accidentally, as it is our Duty to obey the Higher Powers in things that are not ſinful; which to reſiſt, is to reſiſt the Ordinance of God: *And they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* Rom. 13. 1, 2, 3.

And

And when God threatens thus, we had need look to it that we be not deceived, for there are many deceivers gone forth into the World, as the *Quakers*, and others, whom I will not name, that regard not ſuch places of Scripture, and are *not afraid to ſpeak evil of Dignities*, which makes me tremble to think what an account they will be able to give to God, the Righteous Judge, who will one day reckon for all theſe things.

This is a weighty caſe of Conſcience, and it is ſtrange to ſee ſuch, who have very tender Conſciences in other things, make no Conſcience of this, though the Scripture ſaith, that they *muſt needs be ſubject for Conſcience ſake.*

But why ſhould I wonder at this? Since I my ſelf was ſo lately deceived in this matter, by believing Mr. *Lobb*, whom I judged ſo wiſe, as to know how to prove the Church of *England* guilty of *ſinful impoſitions*, and ſo good, as not to deceive us for a Thouſand Worlds; not conſidering that frail man is ſubject to be deceived; and the Scriptures muſt be fulfilled, which ſay, *Wicked men, and ſeducers grow worſe, and worſe, deceiving, and being deceived.*

There being nothing more plain, than that it is a great Duty to obey the Magiſtrate (in things indifferent, and not Eſſential to Religion or Salvation it ſelf) then 'tis evident that Conformity is highly neceſſary, and a great Duty, and in no wiſe to be neglected.

4. There is a great neceſſity of conforming in order to the evincing the truth of Grace in the Soul. For the truth of Grace will appear in a Univerſal Obedience to all Gods commands; *then ſhall I not be aſhamed* (ſaith Holy *David*) *when I have a reſpect*

ſpect to all thy Commandements. If ye love me, (ſaith Chriſt) *keep my Commandements.* A partial Obedience is a certain ſign of Hypocriſie.

Where Obedience is Evangelical, 'tis alſo univerſal; A gratious Soul is ready to ſay *Speak Lord, thy Servant heareth; declare thy Will, and lo I am ready to perform it.* Behold, here God will have us be ſubject to the Higher Powers, as being ordained by him; we are commanded *to obey every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake*: Yet how many, by their actions, do in effect ſay, they will not obey them.

This is an evil ſign, and wo be to them at laſt, that ſhall be found partial in their Obedience. As for my part, I think it highly neceſſary to obey this, as well as other Commands; and except I conform, I cannot render a univerſal Obedience, nor evince true love to Chriſt.

Whence the neceſſity of conforming doth abundantly appear to me, and there can be nothing more agreeable to reaſon, than to do that, which is ſo highly neceſſary.

5. I might add the great Argument made uſe of for Separation, to prove the neceſſity of Conforming, *viz.*

Becauſe I am convinc't in my Conſcience, that Conformity is moſt agreeable to the Word of God, therefore it is my Duty to conform.

This is the main ſtrength of the ſeparatiſts, when they have no other reaſon to produce for ſeparating, they ſay, That they are convinc't in their Conſciences, it is their Duty, and they ought not to act againſt their Conſciences; to them who are convinc't, that to Conform is a ſin, to them it is ſo.

A very

A very ſorry refuge this is, and common to all ſorts of Sectaries, and affords me as much relief in this caſe, as any of them all.

But I thank God, I have other, and better reaſons to inſiſt upon; only what hath been ſaid, may ſuffice to prove, that it is extreamly neceſſary to conform to the good old way of the Church of *England*. What is thus neceſſary, and ſo great a Duty, is moſt unreaſonable to be refuſed, and this is the ſecond reaſon (to prove that Conformity is a great Duty) taken from the neceſſity of Conforming.

The Third Reaſon is taken from the *great benefits that attend Conformity.*

The Benefits that flow thence are twofold; Firſt with reſpect to God, 2. with reſpect to Man.

Firſt, The benefit that accompanies Conformity, hath reſpect to God, who requires the ſame, he hath commanded us ſo to do, in *obſerving of whoſe Commands there is great reward.*

God will not forget ſuch as do it, out of Conſcience to him, but will Crown their endeavours of ſerving him in all reſpects; with his Bleſſing here, and glory hereafter; whereas men that are partial in their Obedience, God will abhor all their good ſervices, becauſe they have not a *reſpect to all his Commandements.* For thoſe that neglect this Duty, cannot have that true peace of Conſcience that God hath promiſed: *Great peace have all they that keep thy Commandements.*

2. This is not all the benefit that comes by Conforming, there is another benefit with reſpect to man; It is a Duty ſo pleaſing both to God, and Man, that it appears great imprudence

dence, and inconſideration in any to neglect it.

They that conform do well, *and the Rulers are only a terrour to them that do evil; If thou do well, thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame, but if thou do evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain, but is the Miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon them that do evil.* Rom. 13. 3, 4. Therefore I have reaſon to conform, conſidering the great benefit that cometh thereby.

Fourthly and Laſtly, They that refuſe to Conform, when both God and Man require it from them; are guilty of a great evil; for they diſpleaſe both, and what good or benefit can then be expected.

The mad World, who care not how much they diſpleaſe God, will notwithſtanding be very diligent to pleaſe men, from whom they expect to receive benefit; nevertheleſs theſe will venture upon the diſpleaſure of both, to pleaſe their own Humour and Parties.

And thoſe that are truly Gracious among them, God will either bring them to repentance for this ſin, or elſe follow them with Calamities, and Afflictions all the days of their lives; either outward in their Bodies and Eſtates, or inward in their Souls, by ſpiritual Deſertions, and withholding from them the *light of his countenance*; for *there is no true peace to them that do evil, ſaith the Lord.* As for wicked men, and ſeducers (of which ſort God knows there are too many) though they may proſper in the World, and meet with no trouble, yet it will be bitterneſs in the latter end, their puniſhment being reſerved for another world; it being expreſs, *They that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.*

And

And ſince theſe are ſome of thoſe Evils that attend *Nonconformity*, I have abundant reaſon upon the ſame account to Conform.

Thus I have given my reaſons why I have Conformed.

And if all this will not juſtifie my preſent Conforming, I will in the next place diſcover all the Objections that I perceive have been made uſe of againſt me for ſo doing, and declare my apprehenſions concerning them all.

O moſt merciful Father, thou judgeſt not as man judgeth, therefore have I boldneſs to approach before thee, who art my God and Gracious Father: Thou knoweſt I have not undertaken to produce theſe Reaſons for any other end, than to let my Brethren know, wherefore I have forſaken them, and to undeceive them of what they have falſly imagined and conceived againſt me. O Righteous Father, let it have this effect, to create in them a Holy jealouſie, leſt they alſo ſhould be deceived in this matter; for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, my dear Lord and Redeemer, Amen.

My

My Apprehenſions concerning the Objections uſed againſt Conforming.

MAnifold are the Objections uſed againſt our Church, and thoſe that conform thereunto, eſpecially if they have eſpouſed other opinions (as I have done) and afterwards hold communion with her.

It is not ſtrange, to ſee a man whoſe Education has been that way, to appear for the Church, but one who from his youth hath been trained up to an averſion to her, to be thus changed is remarkable.

But as it is the effect of Reaſon and a right Underſtanding of the cauſe of that averſion, it is not at all to be wondred at.

The Objections that have been chiefly uſed againſt me, will appear in theſe two things, which reſpect,

Firſt, *My being a Member of an Independent Church.* And,

Secondly, *My forſaking them, to embrace the communion of the Church of* England.

Firſt, As to my being a Member of a Congregational Church they ſay; 'That when I gave 'up my ſelf to them, to be a member of that 'particular Church to which I was related by 'voluntary conſent, and Solemn engagement, I 'was come to years of Underſtanding, capable 'to judge whether they or the Church of *England* did ſerve God in the pureſt way, therefore 'ought ſtill to hold communion with them unleſs I 'intended

'intended to make my ſelf guilty of the Sin of 'Schiſme by ſeparating from a pure Church of 'Jeſus Chriſt.

I anſwer; 'tis true, I was come to years of Underſtanding, but nevertheleſs was ſo much a Novice, as not to be a competent Judge of ſuch ſublime Affairs.

I did act then according to what I underſtood; for I really believed that the Church of *England* was ſo corrupt, and ſo nearly allied to *Rome*, that I thought it was ſin to hold communion with her; and that the *Independent way* was the *pureſt*, and Mr. *Lobbs* Congregation the moſt excellent, as being compoſed of a moſt holy and pious Miniſter and People. Yet all this doth not oblige me to continue in communion with them, if I find I was deceived in my judgment. For I ſee upon a ſtrict Inquiry into the truth of the buſineſs, that the Church of *England* is not ſo corrupt as they repreſent her to be; but really ſuch as I have repreſented her.

That ſhe ſo far differs from the Church of *Rome*, as that ſhe will ſuffer the greateſt perſecutions, rather than be guilty of any of her Idolatries or ſuperſtitions.

That ſhe hath an equal averſion, as well to thoſe that are of that party; as to ſuch who are lawleſs, and diſobedient; among whom I rank the *Independents* and *Presbyterians*, as well as the more groſs Enthuſiaſts; for I do not find that their Love and Obedience is of the right Goſpel ſtamp, ſuch as our Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth require from his Saints.

My Apprehenſion of things now, is not the ſame as it was then, accordingly my actions differ.

I

I did (contrary to the Will of God) join in Fellowſhip with that Congregation, whereof Mr. *Lobb*, (I know not by what Law) aſſumed to himſelf the Paſtoral Charge; which then *I* thought the moſt excellent Church, and conſtituted in all things according to the will of Jeſus Chriſt; But *I* find it otherwiſe, when *I* read, and ſeriouſly take notice of his Laws and Precepts. For what Goſpel Church can that be whoſe very Foundation is laid in perfect diſobedience to the Goſpel it ſelf.

The Goſpel doth not encourage a gathering of a Church or Churches, under a pretence of greater purity, to deſtroy the peace of a pure Church that is eſtabliſhed in a Nation; but exclaims againſt it, diſcovering the heinouſneſs of the ſin. Which ſin *I* fear the Diſſenters will have much to anſwer for; for God will one day diſcover who are the Authors of all thoſe Lamentable diviſions that are amongſt us.

I pray God it may not fall ſo heavy upon diſſenters, as it will upon the Papiſts. Yet this *I* dare be peremptory in that the *Papiſts* could never have had ſuch ſucceſs, had not the diſſenters been the inſtruments, whereby they have wrought almoſt to the bringing a ſecond Civil War among us.

Whence *I* obſerve that diſſenters in ſtriving againſt our Church, will *I* doubt in the end, (if they repent not) betray, not only us, but themſelves alſo, into the hands of the *Papiſts*. Whereas if they would but obey, thoſe ſtrong injunctions our Lord Jeſus hath laid upon them to endeavour the Churches Peace, and to obey their ſuperiours in lawful things, and conform ſo far as

they can without ſin; I dare ſay it would be the only effectual way to ſecure us from the deſigns of *Rome*; and to make us invincible againſt all *Popiſh* Attempts.

But alas! here lies our miſery, though the diſſenters do acknowledge that Union alone can ſecure us againſt *Popery*, yet (through the wiles of Satan, and *Jeſuitical* Policy) they propoſe ſuch Terms for Union, that will inevitably bring us all in bondage to *Rome*; and that is the reaſon I conceive why our Superiours do not anſwer their propoſals.

To alter, and change Laws, is of a very dangerous conſequence, eſpecially if we conſider the different Humors and Intereſts that are amongſt us, how impoſſible it is to pleaſe all men. Yet Mr. *Lobb* is pleaſed to ſay, that we will not part with what we judge but indifferent, though the deſired Union might thereby be obtained. But herein he is much deceived, for by ſo doing, our differences would not be compoſed, nor that Union obtained.

There are ſome in the Church of *England*, would be offended if any alteration ſhould be made; and therefore to alter thoſe things indifferent, would be to create a difference between Conformiſt and Conformiſt; and but very few of the multitudes of diſſenters would conform notwithſtanding; inſomuch that ſtill great diviſions would remain, if not greater than before; which ſhews the inexpediency of altering thoſe things indifferent, which by many diſſenters are confeſt to be lawful.

As appears by a Book call'd *The Harmony between the Ancient and Modern Nonconformiſts*, where

where the Author ſaith (page the fourth) that *The expediency of lawful things makes them duty.* Therefore from him we have this good Argument againſt their ſeparating.

If that conforming to the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*, or the ordinary Lords Days Service be lawful, as that Author doth acknowledge; and expedient, as appears from the ill conſequences that will attend altering the ſame; then,

The lawfulneſs and expediency thereof makes it duty to Conform, according to this Author. Who endeavouring to juſtifie their Nonconformity, ſhews the inexpediency of Conforming from the differences it would create between the Nonconformiſts, not taking notice of the Diviſions that would attend the altering thereof not only between the Conformiſts but the Non-conformiſts alſo.

For what more evident, than if the Church were ſtript of all thoſe antient cuſtoms in uſe (which by the Apoſtles and other Holy men were appointed *for decency*, and to *prevent diſorder in the Church* according to the Divine Law) many would be greatly offended at it, and it may be divide for that reaſon.

Yet perhaps ſome of the *Presbyterians* might then conform, who would for ſo doing be hated by the *Independents*, and others, who I believe will never agree with the Church unleſs they might have their own Wills, to do as they pleaſe in all things: which if they had, how would they be exalted above the reſt of their Brethren? How would they erect Churches? and what different modes of Worſhip would there be? Judge ye.

And I dare be bold to ſay, without breach of Charity, if all this were afforded them, we ſhould ſtill be the object of their contempt, and diſagree as bad as ever.

But here I have run out of what I intended, and beg your Pardon for this digreſſion.

Secondly, Another Objection they have greatly us'd againſt me, is this.

'In joyning with us, (ſay they) you have but 'made uſe of that power, wherewith Chriſt hath 'inveſted you, of chooſing your own Paſtor, and 'having made choice of Mr. *Lobb*, you ought to 'attend upon his Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the 'Magiſtrate forbids you.

This is agreeable to Mr. *Lobbs* own Papers, but how agreeable to Truth, or reaſon, let all men judge.

If a Believer have power to chooſe his own Paſtor, yet it is not an unlimited power; The people have ſome concern in the choice of a Paſtour, even in the Church of *England*.

Weak Believers are no competent judges of the Abilities of Miniſters as well as of their ſoundneſs in Faith.

For who more ready to be toſſed by *every wind of Doctrine*, than young Converts? (weak Believers) whoſe zeal vehemently carries them after crafty Preachers, who pretending to more Holineſs than others, catch the ſimple, and live upon them, though it be to the hurt of their Souls. And though theſe perſons have the root of the matter in them, yet they are eaſily infected with poyſonous Doctrines: And the ſincerity and goodneſs which they apprehend to be in theſe men, is

is the bait that doth allure them. Therefore it concerns every Believer to *try the Spirits*, for *Satan can transform himself into an Angel of light*, *and false Apoſtles* are gone out into the World, *to deceive (if it were poſſible) the very Elect*, who may be deceived by them in many things, to the great diſhonour of God, and hurt of their own Souls; though God will not ſuffer them to periſh eternally for his promiſe ſake, and becauſe they did it *through Ignorance*.

And therefore it is that Chriſt ſaith, *falſe prophets*, *and falſe Chriſts ſhall come into the World*, *to deceive the nations*, inſomuch that if it were poſſible the very Elect ſhould not be ſaved. Which plainly ſhews that Believers themſelves ſhall not wholly eſcape the deceits of theſe men, who muſt put on a great ſhew of Sanctity, and more purity than others, or elſe it can never be effected.

If a Believer have in ſome reſpects a power to chooſe his own Paſtor, (which I will not diſpute) and through great indiſcretion makes uſe of that power, and doth actually chuſe a Paſtor, who afterwards he finds to be a falſe Apoſtle: is he obliged by any Covenant to continue that choice? ſurely no.

Chriſts command is a ſufficient warrant for him to ſeparate. *Take heed that no man deceive you*, *and if any man ſhall ſay unto you*, *lo here is Chriſt*, *or there*, *believe it not*; *wherefore if they ſhall ſay unto you*, *behold he is in the deſert*, *go not forth*; *behold he is in the ſecret chambers*, *believe it not*: *beware of falſe Prophets*, *wolves in ſheeps cloathing*, &c.

As for my part *I* acknowledge *I* did make choice of Mr. *Lobb* to be my Paſtor; *I* was then very

weak, no competent Judge to diſcern between the true Shepherds of Jeſus Chriſt, and the falſe; my ignorance, and raſhneſs was my ſin, which as ſoon as God convinced me of, I endeavoured to avoid by conforming.

3. They ſay I ought not to ſeparate from them, unleſs I can prove, *That they impoſe ſomething upon me that is ſinful.*

As to that, I anſwer,

They not only impoſe that which is *ſinful, and contrary to the expreſs Will of God*, but alſo *omit things that are expedient*; yea, and *commanded in the Word of God*, the truth of this will appear moſt plain thus.

Firſt, They impoſe things ſinful, and contrary to Gods Holy Word; which ſaith, *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers; obey every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake*; but they ſay no, obey them not, (directly oppoſing the Word of God,) for they require you to do things in God's Worſhip, which he hath not commanded; Therefore you may lawfully diſobey them: *It is better to obey God than man*, &c.

To this I reply as our Saviour did to the Phariſees; *This* (indeed) *ought principally to be done to fear God, and keep all his Commandements, and the other ought not to be left undone, to honour our Parents*, (that is, our Superiours,) unleſs they command us what God hath in his Word revealed to be ſinful. What need had there been of theſe Commands (of Obedience to our Superiours) had not God given them ſome power of commanding, even with reſpect to Gods Worſhip, in things that tend only to decency and order. This the Apoſtle confirms, when he ſaith, *Let all things be done decently,*

decently, &c. Therefore who hath Power to appoint theſe things, but thoſe that are in Authority over us, even the *Higher Powers*, whom we may not *reſiſt* or *diſobey*, *in things that are in themſelves lawful*, as all thoſe things are, which are uſed in the Church of *England*.

From whence it will appear, that none who joyn with any particular Church, ſeparate from the true Church eſtabliſhed in the Nation, but muſt comply with this ſin. If this ſin of Diſobedience were not craftily impoſed upon the Conſciences of Diſſenters, we ſhould have very few to ſeparate from the Church of *England*. And that it is meerly an impoſition is evident, becauſe none can be Members of particular Churches that will not comply therewith. Therefore *this Sin*, as it is made *a neceſſary term of Communion*, is in Mr. *Lobb*'s own Judgment *to be avoided, and in no wiſe to be obſerved by good Chriſtians*; (the Counterplot for Union.) Therefore let all men judge what reaſon I have to leave him and his Congregation, ſince I cannot hold Communion with them without ſin. And

2. As they require that which is ſinful in order to hold Communion with them, (namely to *reſiſt the Higher Powers*) ſo they alſo omit what is *expedient and neceſſary*.

The expediency of lawful things makes them Duty. All thoſe things that are obſerved in the Church of *England* are *lawful*, as I ſhall abundantly prove, and are owned *to be ſo* by many *Nonconformiſts*; they are alſo *expedient*. For is it not becoming Chriſtians reverendly to make their approach before God, as well in publique, as in private; in the Church, as well as in the Cloſet;

ſet; by being uncovered, and by bowing before him? (who hath promiſed in a peculiar manner, *to be preſent in the Aſſemblies of his people*,) after the example of thoſe *Nehemiah* 8. 6. and *Pſalm* 95.6. Is it not expedient and neceſſary to avoid all occaſion of contention, ſtrife, debate, *&c*? Yet theſe are the things (with many more) that are omitted by Diſſenters, though they themſelves ſay, that the expediency of that which is lawful, makes it Duty.

But what ſhould I mention theſe things, when they *omit* many things that *God himſelf hath commanded his Holy Word*; as for Inſtance. 1 *Tim.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *I exhort therefore that* [*firſt of all*] *Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and giving of thanks be* [*made*] *for all Men, for Kings, and for all that are in Authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godlineſs, and Honeſty; for this is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour.* Here are many things very remarkable, which Diſſenters generally omit. They have no Supplications, Prayers, Interceſſions, and Thankſgivings [made] for any of theſe occaſions: And though we in the Church of *England* have plenty, yet no Command of the King, or the Parliament, or any ſuperiour Power is ſufficient to engage them to make uſe of any [made] Prayers, Supplications, Interceſſions, or thankſgivings, though they acknowledge them to be as good as ever was made uſe of.

And the reaſon is, becauſe they are *forms*, though this Text doth juſtifie theſe forms as they are uſed in the Church of *England*, and appointed by the Book of *Common Prayer*: I exhort, *that firſt of all*, (before preaching, when the Congregation

gation is come together; to worſhip God, that) *Prayers, Supplications, Interceſſions, and giving of thanks be* [*made*] *for all men, for Kings, and all that are in Authority over us.*

The Book of Common Prayer was made in Obedience to this Divine Command, which is ſufficient to juſtifie the neceſſity of our compliance therewith. Yet this by them is omitted, though enjoyned by Authority Divine, as well as Humane; and when they do pray (after their manner) in publique, or in private, it is not without a ſtrange Omiſſion of this Command. 'Tis true, ſome of them will pray for the King and the Magiſtrates, but I never heard any of them pray for the Clergy, except for ſuch only as ſeparate, but will pray againſt them, as counting them Limbs of Antichriſt, that God would pour down the Vials of his Wrath, and Vengeance upon them, that he would pluck them up, and root them out, to make way for them, who (if you will believe them) are the only true Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt. Yet there are others, who (though they make long Prayers) will not put up a Petition for the King. And ſome that pray for the *King*, will not pray for the *Queen*, nor the *Duke* of *York*, though I know no reaſon they have for it (ſince it is a thing required) unleſs it be that ſuppoſing they are Papiſts, take them to be their Enemies, and think it Duty in the general to pray againſt them as belonging to Antichriſt.

As for my part, I think it is a great Duty to pray for the Papiſts, and the worſt of Enemies; yea, and to love them alſo, taking all opportunities of doing them good. And though we

are

are to pray that Antichriſt, that Man of Sin may be revealed, yet may we not pray againſt any particular perſons, that God would cut them off, and deſtroy them; but that God would turn their hearts, and ſave them; eſpecially any that are our Superiours, whom we are particularly bound to pray for, in our addreſſes to God Almighty.

Wherefore if any Diſſenters ſuppoſe the Duke of *York* to be a Papiſt, (which is but a groundleſs ſuppoſition) yet they ought to pray for him, and (if their Enemy) to love him, if they make the Scripture the rule of their Obedience. But alas! this is not all, for they omit what Jeſus Chriſt himſelf commanded them to do. Chriſt ſaith in *Luke* 11. 2. when ye pray, ſay, *Our Father, &c.* [ſay] what muſt we ſay? We muſt ſay theſe very words, *Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy Name*, &c.

The Presbyterians generally hold it lawful to ſay it in the publick as well as in private, and many of them do ſo.

The Independants think it not lawful either way, *becauſe it is a form of Prayer*, and if uſed, would *juſtifie the uſe of all forms*, plainly oppoſing the very words and meaning of our Lord himſelf, who is the King of Saints, and Lord of all ſuch as do Honour and Obey him, whoſe example we are oblig'd to follow.

I have heard all the Objections that can be urg'd againſt, ſaying, the *Lords Prayer*, which are vain and frivolous, conſidering it is a poſitive Command, and a plain Declaration of the Bleſſed Will of our dear Lord Jeſus.

Though

Though much might be ſaid in this matter, I will add no more, but only deſire my Brethren to conſider that theſe things are Scriptural; and that Diſſenters acting contrary thereunto, act againſt the Scriptures; and that their Teachers who applaud the Scriptures ſo much, diſhonour the Scriptures, by acting ſo contrary to them, as I have now evinced.

2. Againſt the Church of *England*, whoſe Communion I have embraced, they have many things to object. In the general they ſay that I have forſaken the pure way of Chriſt's appointment, and have choſen to my ſelf a way that is corrupt, and diſſonant to the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; which in particular, they would evince thus.

Firſt, (ſay they) You have a *corrupt Diſcipline.*

Secondly, A corrupt *Miniſtry.*

Thirdly, *A Tyrannical Government.* And

Fourthly, A *Superſtitious Worſhip*, under which four particulars may be comprehended, moſt of the Objections uſed againſt our Church.

Firſt, As to her *Diſcipline*, which they ſay is corrupt.

Firſt, Becauſe *ſhe admits prophane people to the Lords Table, whereby they become guilty of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which the Miniſter ſhould prevent, by examining them of their fitneſs for thoſe Heavenly Miſteries.*

Before I anſwer this, and ſome other objections, it will be neceſſary to premiſe theſe two things.

Firſt, That the Church muſt not be condemned for the default of ſome of her Members, or Officers, it was not lawful to ſeparate from the *Jewiſh* Religion, though many of her Members,

and

and Officers did greatly transgress the Ordinances that God had given them; but it was their Duty, only to endeavour to reform what was amiss. So, though there may be defaults in the Church of *England*, through the negligence of some of her Communion, (as there is none but have faults more or less) yet the Church allows not of it, neither can that give any just cause for separation, only it calls for amendment and Reformation.

Secondly, We must imitate the example of our dear Lord Jesus, how opposite soever it be to our practice, and apprehensions of things.

Though the *Jewish* Religion (when our Saviour came into the World) was become very corrupt and Superstitious, as well as their Clergy wicked; yet he no where gives them the least encouragement to separate, though for greater purity; but commands them to obey.

For though the Clergy were wicked, yet Christ would have the people obey them, and do as they were taught, for their Doctrine was good, but in no wise to follow their example, for that was evil. Now as for admitting prophane persons to the Lords Table, our Church doth not allow of it: Though I acknowledge there are frequently too many of such who do receive, yet that is not the Churches fault; nor alwaies the Ministers who doth administer the Holy Sacrament.

The Church of *England* hath taken the greatest care imaginable to prevent it; for she hath ordered that none shall receive the Holy Sacrament, till they have been catechised, and well instructed

ſtructed in the Principles of Religion, and afterwards brought to the Biſhop to be confirmed.

She hath provided good exhortations to be read always ſome convenient time before the Sacrament be adminiſtred, to ſtir up people to a frequent receiving of thoſe Soul-refreſhing comforts, which are to be had in a right participation of that Heavenly Ordinance, and with all doth ſhew the great danger of unworthy receiving, giving certain ſigns and characters, whereby perſons may know when they are fit Gueſts for that Holy Table, with ſeveral other neceſſary things too tedious here to relate, as appears by the Book of Common Prayer. Therefore it is not the Churches fault that prophane perſons come to the Lords Table: Neither is it always the Miniſters fault, for when the Miniſter hath diſcharged his Duty in fore-warning them of the great danger of unworthy receiving, and diſcovered to them who only are meet-Gueſts for that Holy Table; If then they come to receive, can any Miniſter reject them, and warrant his ſo doing by the word of God? I deny it, except it be in caſe the Miniſter have knowledge that any perſon be a ſcandalous liver, then truly he is to forbear, till he have admoniſhed the perſon of his ſin and danger, and till the perſon have manifeſted his repentance, and reſolution of amendment

And in caſe a prophane perſon ſhould venture to embrue his hands in the pretious Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and another diſcern the ſame, (being offended at it) he is in the firſt place privately to admoniſh him of his ſin; and (having waited ſome conſiderable time) if no amendment follow, he

he is to take to him two or three more, who are ſeriouſly to diſcover the Temptations of Satan, and to tell him the danger he is in by walking ſo unſuitably to his Profeſſion, and if he ſtill perſiſt in his evil Courſes, they are to bring it before the Church; the Miniſters and Officers thereof, who are openly to reprove him for his Offences, and after that if he will not be reformed to deprive him of the Ordinance; till he doth manifeſt his unfeigned reſolution of amendment of Life.

This is the method preſcribed in the Church of *England*, and exactly followed by ſome, tho' I confeſs many are too remiſs: yet that can adminiſter no Juſt cauſe for any to ſeparate, it being more frequently the peoples fault than the Miniſters.

For I believe there is none in the Church of *England* will adminiſter the Holy Sacrament to any perſons, but to ſuch whom Charity obliges them to believe are ſincere good Chriſtians. Many ſcandalous perſons do receive, that's confeſt, but if they are known to be ſuch unto the Miniſter, it is upon their promiſing to reform, and amend; and who can reject perſons in that caſe, that hath the leaſt ſpark of Charity in his Breaſt?

I will appeal to the practice of Diſſenters themſelves in that caſe, for what Congregation is there in *London*, (though it pretend to the greateſt purity) that will not bear with ſcandalous Members a long time, and admit them, (ſtill in hopes they will amend) to receive the Holy Sacrament even while they are notorious Sinners, upon their promiſe of amendment: I have known it

it in many Congregations, and am therefore the bolder to ſpeak.

But ſome do object further, and ſay, that none ought to be received into Fellowſhip and Communion, without ſome particular examination before hand of their fitneſs for the ſame.

I confeſs truly that *Turks*, *Jews*, *Infidels*, &c. that own not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; ought to be examined particularly concerning their Faith, and reſolutions of obeying his Goſpel, according to the primitive practice.

But for Chriſtians that have by Baptiſme put on Chriſt, and make a profeſſion of the glorious Truths of the Goſpel, and deſire to partake of that Ordinance, after they have heard of the great danger of doing it unworthily, it is not very material for them; However the Church of *England* hath found out ſuch expedients, that whoever will but follow the Rules ſhe hath preſcribed, may prevent all ſcandal that can ariſe thereupon.

And furthermore it muſt be obſerved, that the Church of *England* is a National Church, taking it in the largeſt ſence, it comprehends all ſorts of Chriſtians amongſt us; But being divided by thoſe manifold Schiſms, that wicked and unreaſonable men have made; Thoſe that adhere to the antient and primitive worſhip of Chriſt, and the Rule of the Holy Scriptures are of the Church.

Theſe the Diſſenters have aſperſed, and calamniated in the moſt egregious manner, for their diſſenting can't be maintained any other way, and by pretending Scripture for it alſo, of which they greatly make their boaſt, having it much in their

their mouths, though it be diametrically oppoſite to their actions.

The Church of *England* being of ſo large an extent, and ſuch multitudes of Sectaries, poſſeſt with moſt unreaſonable prejudices againſt her, it becomes impoſſible for miniſters in their reſpective cures, ſo to diſcharge their duties; as otherwiſe might be expected from them.

Wherefore it is not the Churches fault, nor altogether the Miniſters fault that prophane perſons come to the Lords Table: But chiefly the Peoples fault, in not admoniſhing one another, and giving notice of ſuch defaults unto their Paſtour: which fault of the People I impute to be the diſmal effect of ſeparation, which I am perſwaded would ceaſe upon their returning to the Church again, and being of *one heart and one mind* as the Scripture doth require.

2. In the Church of *England* (they ſay) there is not that Familiarity and Love, which ought to be between thoſe that partake of the Lords Supper; nor that tender care and watchfulneſs of one another as is among the Diſſenters; they do not edifie one another by conferring and praying together as they ought to do.

Here is a ſevere charge againſt our Church, and hence the poor ignorant people think, they have ſufficient Reaſon to juſtifie their ſeparating, and ſtroke themſelves with the conceit of that happineſs they enjoy in being ſeparate from the Church; as tho' they might not be ſuffered to perform thoſe Chriſtian Duties in the Church of *England*, or as though the Church did not allow thereof.

Alas! I am ſorry to hear, and ſee the ſad effects that

that this Temptation hath produced, it was one of the ſtrongeſt bands that kept me ſo long, from the Church of *England*; till God was pleaſed to unlooſe it, and the way he did it was thus.

1. I ſaw that what neglects ſoever there were of that kind, they ought not to be imputed to the Church, which not only allows of; but requires thoſe duties to be put in practice, and whatever elſe really tends to the promoting of Holineſs.

2. Though I ſaw many in the Church of *England* were guilty in thoſe reſpects, yet I ſaw others that were very diligent in the performance of them, and that in a more excellent way than is uſual among Diſſenters, amongſt whom is the greateſt Love and Familiarity, and the moſt tender care and real kindneſs that is poſſible, who edifie, and build up one another in their moſt Holy Faith, and to that end, take all opportunities of conferring together, and pray with and for one another, adding to their Prayers, their Benevolence to the poor, being encouraged thereunto by the Rulers of the Church; wherein perſons that are Religious may have great advantages for Holineſs, and be encouraged to the higheſt pitch that can poſſibly be attained in this world. Therefore what need have perſons to run into paths that are forbidden? when they may accompliſh their end (if it be to *ſerve God in holineſs, and righteouſneſs before him all the days of their lives*) in the way of the *Church of England*.

I can't ſee wherein the *Diſcipline* that Diſſenters

have, exceeds that of the *Church of England*, unleſs it be in confuſion and diſorder and unmannerlineſs, therein it may juſtly claim preheminence, for there every one hath liberty to act according to the dictates of an extravagant fancy, even in Prayer, and be the matter never ſo rude, indecent, cenſorious or blaſphemous, yet they account it ſpiritual Prayer; but a great affront it is to the Spirit of God, all which is prevented in the *Church of England*, where there is good Diſcipline; as appears by the reverential deportment of her Members in all their approaches before the great and glorious Majeſty of Heaven and Earth, who as Creatures expreſs their great ſence and aw of the Divine Majeſty of their Creator.

Thus I have endeavoured to take off the Scandals that are thrown upon our Church with reſpect to her *Diſcipline*, which is certainly the beſt, (every thing duly conſidered) in the whole World.

2. They ſay the *Miniſtry* of our Church is very corrupt.

1. As to their Orders.
2. With reſpect to their Converſations.
3. In their Principles.

Firſt, Their Orders are not according to Holy Scriptures, (they are pleas'd to ſay) and therefore corrupt; adding that we read of no Superiority among the Clergy, that one ſhould be greater or leſs than other, but that they ſhould be all equal and alike; to this I'le give my ſence as followeth.

Firſt, I acknowledge that our Saviour did ſay unto his Apoſtles, (upon that unreaſonable requeſt,

queſt of the Mother of *Zebedees* Children, to have her two Sons ſit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom;) that *whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your Servant.* But he ſpoke not this with reſpect to the Clergy, that one ſhould not be higher than another in the Church.

Amongſt the *Jews* under the Law there were three degrees, the *High Prieſt*, the *Prieſts*, and the *Levites*: So under the Goſpel, there are three degrees among the Clergy, the *Arch-Biſhop*, the *Biſhops*, and the *Presbyters.*

As *Baptiſme*, and the *Lords Supper* come in the room of *Circumciſion*, and the *Paſſeover*, ſo theſe *Orders* among the Clergy *under the Goſpel*, come in the room of thoſe *Orders* among the *Jews under the Law*: The *Arch-Biſhops* inſtead of the *High-Prieſts*; the *Biſhop* inſtead of the *Prieſts*, and the *Presbyters* inſtead of the *Levites.*

The Nature of their Offices likewiſe, are much one and the ſame, having a great ſimilitude, and likeneſe to each other.

And that Epiſcopacy is of Divine Right, plainly appears in that *Timothy* was made *Biſhop of* Epheſus, *and* Titus, *Biſhop of* Crete, whom Paul *the Archbiſhop had ſet in* Crete *for this purpoſe, that he ſhould ſet in order the things that were wanting, and ordain Elders*, (that is, Presbyters, or Miniſters) *in every City*, as the Arch-Biſhop had appointed him, *Titus.* 1. 5.

They who are not fully ſatisfied in this point, let them read ſome of the late works of Dr. *Stillingfleet*, where they may receive full ſatisfaction.

2. As to the corrupt converſations of the Clergy of the Church of *England*, I ſay, I am heartily grieved that any of them ſhould diſhonour their holy profeſſion: I am ſenſible enough that many of them walk not according to the Doctrines they teach; But this is not very ſtrange, neither can it adminiſter juſt cauſe of Separation; for the *tares which the Devil ſoweth, will grow up together with the Wheat, till the Harveſt.*

☞ Hypocriſie for advantage will intermeddle with things that are moſt Sacred; and when it is ſecure in the poſſeſſion thereof, diſcovers it ſelf. Hence it is, that many under ſpecious pretences to ſanctifie, get into Benefices, and when they think themſelves ſecure, diſcover their Hypocriſie, by not walking ſutably to their profeſſion, and thereby bring a ſcandal upon all of the ſame profeſſion, be they never ſo Holy and Good.

Bleſſed be God, we have ſtill many Holy and good men among the Clergy of the Church of *England*, and we have many otherwiſe, the Lord in mercy (to them, and the Nation) change their hearts: The Church of *England* is not ſingular in this matter; for I know no Sects but what are infected more or leſs with this contagion; notwithſtanding it is one of the chiefeſt props to maintain Separation upon, namely to abound in morality and outward ſanctity; wherefore the Hypocriſie of ſome Diſſenting Miniſters, is not eaſily diſcerned by every vulgar eye.

But to ſpeak a little more plain, I ſay, it is the great intereſt of theſe uſurping Miniſters by fair ſpeeches, and a pretty tolerable ſhew of Holineſs, to gull and deceive ſilly people, who like a com-

company of ſheep are led by them whither they pleaſe, which otherwiſe could not be; for if their Hypocriſie were diſcovered in lewdneſs, as it is in ſpiritual wickedneſſes, the people they know would never follow them, which makes e'm carry their matters ſo fair and even to them, ſo cloſe and private to themſelves, that they would not for all the world be diſcovered to their people, it being as much as all their profit and income is worth; yet now and then they will be medling, notwithſtanding theſe inducements to the contrary, and are ſometimes diſcovered, for all they are as it were *transformed into Angels of light.*

And now pray tell me which is the moſt corrupt Miniſtry, that of the Church of *England*, or of Diſſenters; thoſe whoſe Hypocriſie is known, and may therefore be avoided; or thoſe that carry it ſo ſecret, as not eaſily to be diſcerned; I think that theſe laſt are the worſt to be truſted. And thus you have my apprehenſion of this Objection againſt Church Miniſters. But

3. They ſay, many of our *Miniſters* are corrupt in their *Principles*, many are tainted with *Arminianiſme*, as well as others have a good will to Popery, to all which I'le anſwer in a few words.

It is granted by moſt, that the generality of Church Miniſters are ſound in their principles, with reſpect both to *the Arminians* and *Papiſts*; and if here and there one be a little tainted (which is ſore againſt the will of the Church) is it good to ſeparate? and poſſibly fall into the hands of thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is to defend thoſe very errours; many of which, (and teachers of

far worſe errours) are among the Diſſenters; This is juſt as the Proverb goes, *ex malo in pejus*, out of the Frying-pan into the Fire; plunge themſelves into a far worſe condition than before.

Whence it will appear, that perſons in the Church of *England*, are far more ſafe and ſecure from falling into Error, and damnable Hereſies, than elſewhere.

And as for thoſe who ſay that even our Univerſities are tainted with *Arminianiſme*, they are only ſuch who underſtand not wherein *Arminianiſme* doth conſiſt, and are encouraged to buzze it abroad, to frighten ſuch who liſten to their ſtories from her Communion, and to prevent others from cleaving thereunto, by bringing an evil report upon the good way of the Church, and the Miniſters thereof.

But in all this (the Lord make e'm ſenſible of it) there is a great Miſtery of Iniquity: Thus I have according to my ability, ſtopped two of the main ſprings, from whence ſo many objections flow againſt our Church.

A Third is this; Your Church (they ſay) is fraught with exceſſive Tyranny.

Firſt, You uſurp Chriſt's Regal Power, and Authority in his Church.

Secondly, You are of a moſt wicked perſecuting Spirit.

The people being verily perſwaded of the truth of whatever theſe men charge upon the Church of *England*, think they have ſufficient reaſon to ſeparate, and make conſcience of ſo doing, becauſe the Scriptures ſpeak ſo much againſt Perſecutors, and in favour of them that are perſecuted, and looking upon themſelves as ſuch, who

who *ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake* do hug themſelves in the contemplation of that happineſs, which God hath promiſed to thoſe who *ſuffer for well doing*.

But alaſs! They ſport themſelves with their own deceivings, and diſtinguiſh not between *ſevere Chriſtian Diſcipline which God hath commanded*, and *perſecution which he hath forbidden*, as will appear, by conſidering the particulars of the charge.

Firſt, Thsy charge us with uſurping Chriſt's Regal Power and Authority in his Church, which conſiſts in giving Laws unto his Saints, and diſtributing rewards and puniſhments to them, as is their Obedience, or Diſobedience to the ſame; and as if Chriſt had given us an imperfect Rule to walk by; you correct Chriſt's Wiſdom (ſay the Diſſenters) by ſetting up your Laws by his Holy Inſtitutions, your Poſts by his Poſts; and in caſe your Laws be not obſerved, you are far more ſevere than if we broke all Chriſt's Commandements. This is the full force and ſtrength of this Argument againſt our Church; which I apprehend may be anſwered very eaſily thus.

Jeſus Chriſt our Lord is the King, and only Lawgiver of his Church who hath declared to us the whole Counſel of God, and hath omitted nothing that is neceſſary to our Salvacion, which he hath not revealed to us. At the Saints are his Subjects, and are obliged as they love him, to keep all his Commandements.

Chriſt hath ſet Officers in his Church to inſtruct the people what his Will and Pleaſure is, and to appoint ſuch ways and methods to them, that may tend to the more effectual putting his

Laws in practice, whom he hath commanded the people to obey.

Now they, who do no otherwiſe than what Jeſus Chriſt himſelf hath appointed; wherein do they uſurp his Kingly Power, and Authority.

All thoſe things required in the Church of *England* by the Governours thereof, in order to Conformity, are only a few neceſſary things, that are expedient both for *decency, and good order*; which to reject, is to deſpiſe Chriſt's regal Power and Authority, who commands them to render Obedience in that caſe, and is far more exceedingly a contempt of Chriſt's Regal Power, and Authority, then the other can be imagined to be an Uſurpation thereof. Therefore,

Secondly, This is no Tyranny (nor effect of a perſecuting Spirit) to inflict puniſhments upon thoſe that break Chriſt's Laws, neither can Diſſenters juſtly ſay they are perſecuted, though they make a great deal of noiſe about it: They are only puniſhed for their Offences, and ſuffer not as Saints for the cauſe of God, and the ſake of Chriſt, but as Sinners for their Diſobedience to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

Diſobedience to Chriſtian Governours, God hath declared to be as great a ſin as any in the Goſpel; they are *Powers ordained of God; if thou do well, thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame, but if thou do evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the Sword in vain, but he is the Miniſter of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.*

The Scripture doth not call this a perſecuting, but Juſtice executed by the Magiſtrate upon evil doers; or it is like to Parents correcting undutiful Children for their faults.

But

But ſtill the Sectaries would have this to be *perſecution*, becauſe they ſuffer for *Conſcience ſake*, and for ſerving God according to his word (as they term it) neither of which can be made to appear with any tolerable ſhew of reaſon.

For if I ſuffer for Conſcience ſake, then I know that the *thing* I am *required* to do, God hath *forbidden*, or the *thing* I am *required not to do, God hath commanded*; either of theſe is ſinful, and *it is far better to ſuffer than to ſin, to obey God rather than man.*

But this is not the caſe of Diſſenters, the Magiſtrate commands them to conform to a few neceſſary things, which God hath no where forbidden in his Word; and if they ſuffer upon that account, it is for Diſobedience, and not for Conſcience ſake.

Again the Magiſtrate forbids them to ſeparate and follow pernicious Teachers, which tends greatly to ſeduce them from their Obedience to God, and Loyalty to the King, which God alſo forbids them; and if they ſuffer upon that account, it cannot be for ſerving God according to his Word, nor for Conſcience ſake; and conſequently it can be no perſecution they undergo.

For it is the expreſs Word of God, *Ezra 7. 26. Whoſoever will not obey the Word of thy God, and the Word of the King, let Judgment be executed ſpeedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or unto Baniſhment, or unto Confiſcation of Goods, or to Impriſonment.*

And though Diſſenters pretend to ſuffer for Preaching and Praying, and performing other acts of Religion which God hath commanded; yet it is nothing ſo, for all theſe Duties they

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may perform, in the way which God hath appointed even in the *Church of England*, and have praiſe of the ſame.

Whereby it plainly appears that they only ſuffer for their diſobedience to the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and that the King, the Biſhops, and others in Authority are the *Miniſters of God for good unto them.*

And though now they cry out of Perſecution, and Tyranny, they forget themſelves that it is the ſame meaſure wherewith they did mete to others when they were in Authority.

Nay the Church of *England* knows not how to be ſo barbarous and cruel as thoſe were, who under the pretence of Religion, cut off the Head of a moſt Pious and Excellent King and juſtified that their moſt horrid Villany, to be an excellent and glorious work, and good Service to God; who turn'd out the Church Miniſters, though many of them very holy, and good Men, and had ſome of them a great charge of Children too; not ſuffering them ſo much as to keep School to maintain their Families, and to get bread for their Children, yea, they themſelves judged Toleration to be a very unreaſonable thing, and in no wiſe to be allowed of, and were more ſevere againſt thoſe that did ſeparate, than the Epiſcopal now are

The *Church of England* is ſo far from Tyranny, that ſhe hath been a moſt indulgent Mother, correcting and puniſhing her diſobedient Children the Diſſenters, far leſs than they have deſerved

Therefore the imputation of Tyranny to the Govern-

Government of the *Church of England*, is a very falſe and malicious thing; but there is more ſtill behind.

4. The *Church of England* (they ſay) hath not only a corrupt Diſcipline, a corrupt Miniſtry, and a Tyrannical Government, but a *Superſtitious Worſhip*. And here they triumph abundantly, making the People believe, that the Church is ſo corrupt through Superſtition; that the very thoughts of holding Communion with her, are abominable to them.

And here I will labour to undeceive my Brethren, who are ready and willing to cleave to the Truth of the Goſpel wherever it be found. The things which they affirm are wholly untrue, as will appear by examining the matter.

In the general they charge us with *Superſtition in the worſhip of God, or the making thoſe parts of Chriſts Religion which he himſelf hath not made ſo; or otherwiſe to make that neceſſary to Salvation which is not commanded in holy Scriptures.*

This is one great branch of *Superſtition* which the Diſſenters charge upon our Church, but fail in the proof thereof; as will appear in its proper place.

Another branch of *Superſtition* is this; to teach men to believe [that] *to be ſinful, which is not forbidden in the Scriptures*; and thereby ſtagger the faith of weak Chriſtians, filling them with groundleſs fears and Jealouſies, [leaſt] they ſhould offend God by ſuch and ſuch things; which they can't prove to be any way ſinful by the Word of God.

Yet this by the vile inſinuations of wicked men becomes the occaſion of unſpeakable miſchief; which

which is the other branch of *Superſtition*, whereof diſſenting Miniſters are guilty in a very high degree, who teach the ſame.

But it is the former they charge upon our Church, namely, the impoſing upon them many things that are not commanded in the Holy Scriptures.

As Firſt, *Set Forms of Prayer.*
Secondly, *The Croſs in Baptiſme.*
Thirdly, *Kneeling at the Lords Supper.*
Fourthly, *The uſe of the Surplice.*
Fifthly, *Bowing at the name of Jeſus, and towards the Eaſt.*
Sixthly, *The Religious obſervation of Holy days*; with ſeveral other things, too many to be enumerated, but theſe are the chief; upon which account they charge us with *Superſtition*, or an unaccountable *adding to the Worſhip of God.*

They can't prove that any of theſe things are forbidden either directly or by conſequence, and ſo unlawful.

But being added (ſay they) to the Worſhip of God, and made parts of Religion, and ſo neceſſary to Salvation as to become the terms of Chriſtian communion; they become *Superſtitious* and ſinful, and not to be complyed with.

This is the very utmoſt that the wiſeſt and craftieſt of them all can produce in favour of their diſſenting, and appears to be but a very ſorry defence, if we conſider that all theſe things, (tho' ſome of them do accompany the Worſhip of God, yet they) are *no parts of Worſhip*, nor are ſo eſteemed in the *Church of England*; but certain *Adjuncts*, and *neceſſary Appendices*, which are in the power of our Superiours

periours to appoint; to which Injunctions, the people are bound to render Obedience, and they are not *neceſſary to Salvation, nor obligatory upon the conſcience, when diſtinct from their command*; and may be altered as thoſe in authority ſee meet, for the better promoting of Godlineſs.

That indifferent things, (which tend not only to edification, but alſo to decency and order) may be appointed to be obſerved in the worſhip of God, is evident from theſe Scriptures, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26, 40. *Let all things be done to edifying. Let all things be done decently and in order.*

And as if ſome things of this nature were ſtill wanting, the ſame Apoſtle in that Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, Chap. 11. laſt verſe, ſaith, *the reſt I will ſet in order when I come.*

And in the Church of *Crete* there were ſeveral things wanting, which *Titus* was *to appoint, and ſet in order*, Tit. 1. 5.

Yet there was nothing neceſſary to Salvation that Chriſt had not himſelf ordained and appointed for them before.

Whence it is clear, *that ſome few neceſſary things that are decent, and tend to Edification and good order, may be appointed to be obſerved in the Church of God.*

Before they were appointed, it was no ſin, nor duty to obſerve them; but being appointed, and to refuſe to render Obedience thereunto, is to ſin againſt all theſe places of Scripture, Heb. 13. 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves.* 1 Pet. 2. 13. *Submit your ſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lords ſake.* Rom. 13. 12. *Let every Soul be ſubject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, the powers that be*

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are ordained of God, whoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God, and they that reſiſt ſhall receive to themſelves damnation. And in verſe 5. the Apoſtle tells them they muſt for this reaſon *needs be ſubject, not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake.*

And as if people were apt to ſlight this Doctrine St. *Paul* commands *Titus* to *put them in mind to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey Magiſtrates,* &c.

All thoſe things which our Superiors have appointed us to obſerve in the Church of *England*, are both *lawful* and *neceſſary*; They are lawful in that the Scripture doth leave ſome things, to humane Prudence to determine, and hath excepted againſt none of theſe in our Church, which have thoſe qualifications that are required in the Scriptures.

There are many indifferent things that are ſimply neither good nor evil, that have an edifying property in them to ſtir up the dull mind to the remembrance of Duty; which notwithſtanding our Superiours may not appoint in the Service of God: becauſe they want other qualifications which the word doth require, as for Inſtance,

Eating and Drinking, ſlaying of Oxen and killing of Sheep, Carding and Spinning, Dancing, *&c.*

All theſe, (and *many more which the Author of the Harmony mentioneth*) are lawful things, and have their ſignification, but may not be brought into the Service of God, becauſe they are not decent, which is a great qualification that the Scriptures do require to make them meet for ſuch

ſuch a uſe. But to examine the particulars a little will be neceſſary, to ſilence all objections.

Firſt, *Set Forms of Prayer.*

There are many objections made againſt the *Forms of prayer uſed in the Church of England*; viz. *The Common-prayer*, and other Forms of Prayer uſed by many Miniſters before, and after Sermon, together with the Forms preſcribed, and recommended to the uſe of Chriſtians in private.

Firſt, The *Common-Prayer*, or Divine Service; upon which they have put the moſt odious Epithets that can be invented, and have uſed their utmoſt skil to turn it all into ridicule; Sacrilegiouſly prophaning the pure Word of God or that which is moſt agreeable thereunto. Some to repreſent it *Popiſh*, and Antichriſtian call it the Maſs, others to repreſent it nauſeous and contemptible, call it Porridge; all of them in ſo doing abundantly gratifie both the Pope and the Devil.

Alas! this is not to ſerve God, but to provoke him to anger, for it diſcovers moſt dreadful deceit in the heart, *ſpeaking evil of things they underſtand not*, or if they underſtand, *like to brute beaſts, in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves, diſcovering their own filthineſs, and uncleanneſs*, 2 Pet. 2. 12. Jude 8, 10.

It is true there are many excellent things, in the Book of *Common-Prayer*, that are alſo in *the Maſs-Book*; as the *Three Creeds*, the *Gloria Patri*, with divers prayers for ſundry occaſions; all which are very ſound, uſeful and neceſſary; and it diſcovers a moſt malicious unchriſtian Spirit to call it the Maſs, only becauſe there are ſome things in it, which are in the Maſs Book.

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It is as much as to call a man *a Turk* becauſe he believes ſomething to be good contained in the *Alcoran*; or to ſay all ſuch are *Jews* that believe the Books of the *Old Teſtament* are the Word of God: Good Chriſtians may ſtedfaſtly own, and believe theſe things, without being either *Turks* or *Jews*: ſo there may be many good things in the Common-Prayer-Book which are alſo in the Maſs; and yet as great difference between them, as is between *Judaiſme*, and *Chriſtianity*, or *light* and *darkneſs*.

The *Book of Common-Prayer*, is as excellent a Book as ever was compoſed by the Wit of Man; moſt agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and moſt exactly correſponding to the practice of the Primitive Saints next unto Chriſts time.

And there is none can ſpeak againſt it, but muſt greatly wrong God, and their own Souls, by ſpeaking againſt that which is ſo agreeable to his Will, and ſubſtantially grounded upon his holy Word, that hath purged out of it whatever is untrue, whatever is uncertain or unneceſſary; and yet many vile, filthy, uncharitable wretches will call it the worſt of names, as an undigeſted Meſs of Hodg-podg, Porridge, and what not.

Oh! the height of ſpiritual wickedneſs ſome are arrived unto, exalting themſelves in their own imaginations, above the reſt of their Brethren: But God hath threatned to pull down the Pride of ſuch, and hath in all Ages, given us many Examples of his dreadful vengeance upon all ſuch ever ſince the time of *Lucifer* of old.

This ſhould teach us to be very humble, to be afraid to ſpeak evil of thoſe things we throughly underſtand not, and to be afraid of *corrupting our ſelves*

ſelves like Natural Brute Beaſts (as the Apoſtles phraſe it) in thoſe things which we know not to ſay and cenſure as others do, but to put on Charity, (the moſt excellent Ornament of a Chriſtian;) *which envieth not, vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, nor behaveth it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoyceth not in iniquity, but rejoyceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

If this Cardinal Grace were in every ones poſſeſſion, there would be no occaſion, either of Diviſion, or Separation; but where it is wanting, there is *ſtrife, envy, and malice, with every evil work.*

O! That my Brethren, the Diſſenters would but ſeriouſly weigh and conſider theſe things as I have done, and earneſtly implore the God of Heaven to guide them into the way of all Truth; then I am perſwaded they would take the ſame meaſures as I have done, and look upon Separation in its own proper colours.

As to the *Book of Common Prayer*, I will ſay no more but only this, that for all common and ordinary caſes, there is none like it; for all extraordinary occaſions, Miniſters and People are left to their own diſcretion, either to pray *ex tempore*, or to digeſt their matter into ſome form.

And though the *Canon* directs them how to pray, yet it doth not abſolutely confine them to any thing, as common practice and experience tell us.

Wherefore, ſuch as ſay the Miniſters are confined to a form only, ſpeak contrary to the truth, and dayly experience.

And tho' forms of Prayer are made for the uſe of weak Chriſtians in private, yet it hinders none who have the gift from a due improvement of the ſame.

Though moſt of the *Presbyterians* have very little to ſay againſt theſe things, or againſt Lay Communion with the Church of *England*: Yet the *Independants* have irreconcileable prejudices againſt all forms; and the reaſons they have for it, are principally theſe two.

Firſt, Forms of Prayer (they ſay) tend only to *maintain, and nouriſh lazineſs in the Clergy and Laity* in that great and eſſential Duty of Religion.

Secondly, Forms of Prayer are *a ſtinting of the Holy Spirit.*

To the firſt I anſwer, That Forms of Prayer do not always nouriſh lazineſs, and indifferency in that great Duty of Prayer, but the contrary; for gracious Souls that are ſincere, and conſcientiouſly ſeek unto God, it tends to quicken them up to greater diligence.

For they conſidering before hand what they have to ſay, and what words are beſt to be uſed; do with all Humility expreſs them before God, in an acceptable manner; whereas many that are not gifted, having their words to coyn, know not what to ſay, and to fill up their time with ſpeaking, ſome are guilty of abundance of tautology, and vain babling, others of ſpeaking nonſence, and ſome of moſt dreadful Blaſphemy; which is too often the effect of *extempore* Prayer among the weaker ſort, and might be prevented by uſing a form, that's ſutable to their condition, where-

wherein they might pray fervently and effectually, without any danger of offending God by undue, or irreverend expreſſions.

Which recommends the great uſefulneſs and neceſſity of Forms of Prayer to be uſed by weak Chriſtians, for requiring them to make their ſolemn addreſſes to God by *extempore Prayer*, is to expoſe them to great danger, and as it were, to put edge tools into the hands of unskilful perſons to their own hurt.

There are alſo many good Chriſtians, and great proficients in the School of Chriſt, that have but ſlender gifts, for whom forms of Prayer are very neceſſary on all publick accounts, and better to be uſed than the other; to prevent all thoſe evil concomitants that uſually attend thoſe kind of Prayers performed by perſons of but ordinary abilities.

And beſides *extempore* Prayer comes to one, and the ſame thing with a *form* in the uſe, with reſpect to thoſe that are preſent at Prayer, for they *are ty'd up to the very expreſſions of the Orator*, whereby it *becomes a form to them.*

And moreover it is not ſo good as a form, becauſe he that prays ſincerely, his heart muſt aſcend up to God along with his Petitions, which cannot be without the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and as *he muſt pray with the Spirit, ſo he muſt pray with the underſtanding alſo.*

Now in a *form of Prayer*, a Perſon may conſider every Petition beforehand, what is requeſted of God therein, and what is wrapt up in all the myſterious words that compoſe the ſame, and then may perform his Duty with great freedom of Spirit, and vigour of mind, by the aſſiſtance

of the Holy Ghoſt; to all which Petitions that he has before approved of, he may freely, and without any contradiction of Spirit, ſay *Amen.*

But it is not ſo in *extempore Prayer*, for firſt, perſons muſt ſo hearken to the words of the Oratour, as to judge whether they are proper.

Secondly, Whether the Petitions are good ſence. And

Thirdly, Whether they are ſuch as he can accord to, and in his heart ſay, *Amen.*

All theſe things muſt be, if we pray *with underſtanding*, as we are required in the Scripture, and all theſe things being unfit to be performed in a Duty renders a premeditated form the more excellent.

But if any reply, and ſay that theſe things may eaſily be performed in Holy Duties; I anſwer in the negative for theſe reaſons.

Firſt, In *extempore* and free Prayer, many uncouth expreſſions are oftentimes uttered, which are not underſtood by the Hearers, nor ſometimes by the Orator himſelf, which makes them they cannot pray with the underſtanding: And if they pray not *with the underſtanding*, I am *ſure they can't pray with the Spirit.*

Secondly, In *extempore* Prayer, Illiterate perſons ſpeaking their words improper, or being ſtreightned forwards, ſpeak what comes uppermoſt, and ſo fail of ſence, and of expreſſing what is chiefly upon their Spirits, which they might prevent by taking time to compoſe the ſame into a form, which would be more edifying to the Hearers, and more abundantly according to the mind of the Spirit.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, There are others may expreſs words eaſie to be underſtood, proper, and good ſence, and yet the matter of the Petition may be ſuch, to which all that are preſent, dare not ſay, *Amen.*

Many of which ſort I have heard in my time, and they do greatly diſtract one in Holy Duties; all which is prevented by uſing of forms; which I judge to be moſt requiſite for all publick occaſions, except it be for thoſe that have ſingular parts, and that are very Orthodox in their Judgment, otherwiſe unſpeakable evils attend that kind of praying in Meeting-Houſes, and Families.

And I may further add, that lazineſs, and great indifferency, in that great Duty of Religion, will not admit many to uſe premeditated forms. For either they think they muſt uſe e'm, and never conſider what is in them at all, or elſe reject them as uſeleſs, and unneceſſary.

It is Satans policy to drive perſons into one extream or other.

And had not a *form* been *lawful*, and neceſſary upon ſuch conſiderations as theſe; our Bleſſed Saviour, doubtleſs would never have preſcribed us a *form*, and commanded us to the frequent rehearſal thereof.

He that hath any occaſion to pray upon a publick account, either in the Church, or in his Family, ought to be diligent as well to prepare good matter, as to pray in a right manner; for it is the matter that is edifying to others, but the manner of performance that is pleaſing to God, and profitable to a mans ſelf.

Such a one I say ought to digeſt his matter into ſome form, and ſee that it be ſound and agreeable to the Word of God, and that it be pertinent, and ſutable to the preſent occaſion.

Now all this can't be done without great pains, and induſtry, whereas to run, and ſpeak a few words that come uppermoſt, is eaſily performed without any trouble.

Therefore ſet forms of Prayer conſcientiouſly uſed, do not nouriſh lazineſs, and indifferency in that great Duty of Religion, but the contrary, which diſcovers the falſhood, and vanity of this Objection.

2. Another great Objection is concerning our putting *bounds and limits to the Holy Spirit*, confining it to a form of word.

This they Illuſtrate by the ſimilitude of a man, who had but one Bed for all ſorts of Travellers; if they were ſhorter than the Bed, it was his cuſtom to ſtretch them out to the full length thereof; but if they were longer than the Bed, his cuſtom was to pare off, or cut ſo much of them as did excede the ſame.

The man is every one that uſeth a form of Prayer. The Bed is the form which he uſeth. The Traveller is the Spirit of God, which is not always poured out in the ſame meaſure.

Therefore (they ſay) if our Prayers are more, or longer than the Spirit will aſſiſt us in; that is, a ſtretching the Spirit to our Prayers: But if the Spirit be abundant in us, and our form of Prayer be too ſhort or narrow to contain it, that is a paring it off, or confining it within ſuch bounds and limits.

To this I anſwer, The Objection is either true or falſe, if it be true, then our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath confined the Spirit himſelf, in that form of Prayer which he hath taught us: *When ye pray, ſay our Father*, &c.

I can't believe that the Spirit is ſtinted in this, or in any other form of Prayer; for he that duly underſtands what is contained in the Petitions of the Prayers he uſeth, and ſincerely, and earneſtly beggs thoſe things at the hands of God; prays by the Spirit, and prayes with the underſtanding alſo, according as God requires.

And if the Spirit convinceth any man of his danger, and of his wants; that man will be diligent to find out ſutable words, to expreſs the ſame to God Almighty.

Secondly, If *forms* of Prayer be a ſtinting of the Holy Spirit; then why are we commanded in the Scriptures, to make *forms* of *Prayers, Supplications, Interceſſions, and giving of thanks for all men, for Kings, and for all in Authority over us?* Moreover,

Thirdly, The Saints of old have uſed forms of Prayer, and are no where ſaid to have ſtinted the Spirit of God.

Job he *did chooſe out his words to reaſon with God*, Job 9. 14. *and made a Prayer*, Chap. 10. ſee likewiſe *Job* 13. 18. and 23. 4.

David, he made many forms of *Prayer* and *Praiſes*, which he hath left upon record in *the Book of Pſalms* to be uſed as ſuch, *Pſalm* 92. 102, &c.

And ſo have many other Saints mentioned in the Old and New Teſtament.

All this proves that *forms of Prayer* are lawful and neceſſary to be uſed on all ordinary, and publick accounts; and if ſo, it can be no ſtinting the Spirit of God.

Since our Saviour preſcribes us a form, and commands us to ſay it; and St. *Paul* commands us to make Prayers for all occaſions; ſince the Saints in all ages have uſed ſet forms of Prayer, and the Scripture doth no where call it a ſtinting the Spirit, neither was it ever ſo eſteemed, till of late years. It is therefore a very weak and unjuſt Objection.

But others add, That by making of *forms* to pray by, we pretend to know that which the Scriptures ſay we cannot know; for *we know not* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *what we ſhould pray for as we ought*; and yet by making of forms, we contradict the Scriptures, and in effect ſay, we know what we ſhould pray for as we ought, without the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit.

Alas! This is a very idle Objection, and they that urge it, greatly betray their folly and ignorance: yet I have met with ſome that have very confidently oppoſed all reaſon to defend this point; but let ſuch anſwer me theſe two queſtions.

Firſt, Is it the Spirit of God only that doth furniſh people with matter for *extempore* Prayer, or not?

The Objection affirms, that the Spirit helps with matter, though it is well known that the Spirit of God is a Spirit of great Wiſdom and Underſtanding; a Spirit of Truth and Love; and

and they that make it the ſole Author of Spiritual and free Prayer, deny this Truth practically, and make it the Spirit of Nonſence, of Error, and great Uncharitableneſs; yea, and ſometimes the Spirit of Blaſphemy; becauſe many *extempore* Prayers admit of ſuch enormous defects, which muſt by no means be fathered upon the Spirit of God, which will certainly come to paſs, if the Spirit of God helps our infirmities with reſpect to matter in Spiritual, and Free Prayer.

Secondly, If all Spiritual and Free Prayer be not the immediate dictates of the Holy Ghoſt, which to aſſert, were Blaſphemy; then I demand why *a form of Prayer* may not as lawfully be uſed as the other: From what hath been ſaid, it appears to be not only lawful, but far more neceſſary and expedient for all weak Chriſtians to uſe a form of Prayer, eſpecially on all publick Accounts, as in their Families, *&c.*

For if the Spirit of God helps our Infirmities, not ſo much with reſpect to our matter, as to the right manner of performance; it will thence plainly appear, that a premeditated form is the beſt; and that the Objector is a kind of Heretick, by defending a point that hath ſuch Blaſphemy in it, as to make the Spirit of God the Author of all that wickedneſs which is too often committed in *extempore*, and Free Prayer.

Premeditated Prayers may with far more reaſon be called Spiritual Prayers, becauſe they are, (if recommended to publick uſe) agreeable to the Word of God, and according to the mind of the Spirit, which cannot be ſaid by all ſuch as are *extempore*.

All which doth not only juſtifie, but diſcover the great wiſdom of the Governours of the Church of *England* in appointing the *forms of Prayer* that are in uſe amongſt us.

Hence it will appear further, that there is far better Diſcipline in the *Church of England*, than among the beſt of the *Nonconformiſts*; for they admit not their Members to create confuſion in the Church, by their own affected, and wicked Inventions; which defect of Diſcipline among Diſſenters hath been the bane of this Nation, and a heavy Judgment of God upon us.

For they have ſeparated themſelves, and have forſaken the way of Truth, to follow their own Inventions, whereby they will bring upon themſelves (if they repent not) ſwift deſtruction, and the Scriptures muſt be fulfilled, which ſay, that *many will follow their pernicious ways, whereby the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of, and through Covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandiſe of you, whoſe Judgment now of a long time lingreth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not.*

And St. *Peter*, deſcribing who theſe are,

Firſt, Saith, They are ſuch as *walk after the fleſh, in the luſts of uncleanneſs.*

Secondly, They are ſuch as *deſpiſe Government, they are preſumptuous, ſelf-willed, and are not afraid to ſpeak evil of Dignities.*

Thirdly, They are ſuch, who *like Natural Brute Beaſts made to be taken, and deſtroyed, ſpeak evil of the things that they underſtand not.*

Fourthly, They are ſuch who *ſport themſelves with their own deceivings, who have eyes full of Spiritual Adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin, beguiling unſtable ſouls; an heart they have exerciſed with*

with covetous practices, cursed Children, which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray following the way of Balaam *the Son of* Bozor, *who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*

And *Jude* he describes them to be *such who despise Dominion, and speak evil of Dignities; who speak evil of those things which they understand not, but what they know naturally as Brute Beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves, who have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of* Balaam *for reward, and perished in the gain saying of* Kore.

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own Inventions, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration, because of advantage; these be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

These hard sayings are express words of Holy Scripture, and fall upon such who separate themselves, thereby causing the way of Truth, (the way of the Church of *England*) to be evil spoken of, who oppose Authority, and being a dissatisfied people, will walk after their own Lusts, and Inventions.

If the Dissenters will clear themselves from all these charges of Holy Scripture, they must alter their properties, or else they never can.

God grant they may lay these things to heart, and seriously consider them, that they may learn to know how they may escape all the Wrath which God hath pronounced, and threatned to bring upon them.

As for my part I tremble to think what will be the end of these things.

And

And thus I have given my Judgment concerning the first thing Objected, as being a sinful imposition; namely the *forms of Prayer* used in the *Church of England*; and among the Members thereof.

Secondly, The *Cross in Baptisme* is another, and none of the least which they insist upon.

The chiefest thing objected against this is, That there is *too much of the Nature of a Sacrament in it*, viz. *the sign, and the thing signified, which are the two essential parts of a Sacrament, and to add this to Baptisme, is to make it a Sacrament upon a Sacrament.*

But this is only to cast a stumbling-block in the way of weak Christians; for if it were true that every sign which hath its signification, did therefore become a Sacrament, because it hath in it the Nature of a Sacrament; then I may safely say, there are many hundred Sacraments in the world, which for the same reason would become unlawful to be used, and such arguing would be ridiculous, as for instance.

It would be unlawful to give Badges to Watermen, or Livery to Foot-men, because they are significant signs. The Badge is a sign that the Waterman serves such a person of Quality who hath bestowed the same upon him, and is useful to distinguish between the Servants of one Person of Quality, and another; and so is the Livery.

Again it would be unlawful to hang out a Bush at a Tavern because of its signification.

Also it would be unlawful to display colours of all sorts for the same reason; and it would be un-

unlawful for Tradeſmen, by any ſign to ſignifie their profeſſion; in all which, and innumerable multitudes more, there is the ſign, and the thing ſignified; and therefore the nature of a Sacrament, which they ſay makes it unlawful.

But it may be further objected that theſe are ſigns which have only a carnal, and worldly ſignification, and are not brought into the ſervice of God, therefore no Sacraments.

To which I anſwer, There is nothing we can behold, but hath ſome ſpiritual ſignification in it, yet they are no Sacraments, and the uſing them in the ſervice of God for a good end and purpoſe, doth not make them Sacraments, which is lawful to be done as I have proved, provided they have ſuch qualifications as the Scripture doth require.

For be there never ſo much of the Nature of a Sacrament in any thing, yet it can be no Sacrament without the inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt.

Therefore the Croſs in Baptiſme is no Sacrament, and the objection is made only to amuſe ſilly people.

The Croſs in Baptiſme is an antient thing, and no relick of Popery, being long in uſe (before Popery was invented,) by ſuch who (like St. *Paul*) gloried in nothing ſo much as in the Croſs of Chriſt; which made them to croſs themſelves, and croſs their Children, to ſhew their Enemies how much they loved the Croſs of Chriſt.

And this ſhall ſuffice to ſhew the lawfulneſs of the *Croſs in Baptiſme*, which arguments do effectually induce me to comply with it.

The

The Third thing is, *kneeling at the Lords Supper.*

The *Presbyterians* generally hold *kneeling* to be *lawful*, but *sitting more expedient*, as being more agreeable to the Nature of the Ordinance, and the Example of our Saviour, though in both I apprehend they are mistaken.

For the word which in English is Translated, and he sat down with the Twelve, doth in the Original represent the use of the Country at their Suppers, which was a leaning posture.

Wherefore if Christ's example must be exactly followed, then the Nonconformists are wrong in their practice,

First, Of Sitting.

Secondly, In suffering more then Twelve to receive at a time.

Thirdly, Of admitting Women to the Sacrament.

Fourthly, Of suffering any to receive but Ministers.

And thus none of the Laity would receive any benefit from this dying institution of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And from thence I might further add, that the Sacrament might be administred to prophane and notorious Sinners; for Christ did give it to *Judas*, whom he knew to be so wicked, as to betray him, and of whom he said, one of you hath a Devil.

And as for *sitting* being most agreeable to the Nature of the Ordinance, I judge not for this reason, because of the unmannerliness of it.

For considering God to be a great and glorious Being, Infinitely Exalted above all his Creatures,

tures; and my ſelf a vile unworthy Wretch, undeſerving of the leaſt of his favours.

Therefore in approaching before God in that great and ſolemn Ordinance to pray unto him, and receive from him the great and unſpeakable Bleſſings of the Goſpel; I am convinc't I ought to do it in the moſt Reverend manner, humbly upon my knees, there to expreſs my thankfulneſs for thoſe great and wonderful Bleſſings I receive from him in that Ordinance, which is but reaſonable.

And if we do ſo much, to Earthly Potentates, when we receive ſome ſignal favour from them; how much more will God expect it, (*who is the King of Kings, and the great Potentate of Heaven and Earth*) when he is giving to us his Son.

Mr. *Lobb* hath far exceeded any I know or ever heard of, in ſpeaking againſt this geſture of kneeling. For,

Firſt (ſaith he) It is made neceſſary to Salvation, in that it is made a term of Chriſtian Communion, and ſo becomes ſuperſtitious.

Nay Secondly, He ſaith it is Image Worſhip, a kneeling down to Bread and Wine.

As to the firſt, Kneeling being proved lawful, and the moſt reverend geſture, was thought meet to be appointed in the Church, at the receiving of that Holy Sacrament.

And leaſt any ſhould fear, that adoration was meant thereby; the Church thought meet for the ſatisfaction of the ſcrupulous to inſert this Declaration of her Judgment in the Book of *Common Prayer*,

Whereas

WHereas it is ordained in this Office, for the Administration of the Lords Supper, that the Communicants should receive the same Kneeling, (which order is well meant, for a signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgement of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy Receivers, and for the avoiding of such Prophanation and disorder, in the Holy Communion, as might otherwise ensue) yet, least the same Kneeling should by any Persons, either out of Ignorance and Infirmity, or out of Malice and Obstinacy, be misconstrued and depraved; it is here declared, that no Adoration thereby is intended or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine, there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ natural Flesh and Blood; for the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their very natural substance; and therefore may not be Adored (for that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians) and the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christs natural Body, to be at one time in more places than one.

Now how can there be any thing of *Image-Worship*, since no Adoration is intended or done, either to the *Elements* or the *Corporal Presence of Christs natural Flesh and Blood.*

If it be said, to be a worshipping God before the Creatures of Bread and Wine, and in that sence Image-worship, as Mr. *Lobb* seems to intimate.

Then

Then I ſay, ſuch who Worſhip God ſitting, ſtanding, or any other way before ſuch Creatures, are as Guilty of the ſin, as thoſe that do it kneeling, for it is ſtill the ſame *act of Worſhip*, only expreſſed by *different geſtures*.

Indeed ſomething they would ſay to make the People believe that the Terms of Communion are ſinful Terms; but nothing can they make out by Scripture or ſound Reaſon.

For as kneeling is required in order to Communion, ſo it is proved to be lawful and good, and acknowledged to be ſo by many diſſenters themſelves; and is a term of Communion no otherwiſe than as ſitting is among the Non-conformiſts.

I am perſwaded, there are many among them, who would not adminiſter the Sacrament to any kneeling (though their Conſciences would not ſuffer them to take it ſitting) and there is great reaſon for it; becauſe then they would make them guilty of that which they call ſin; even to kneel at the Lords Supper.

Therefore we may as well ſay, Diſſenters make ſitting, a *term of Chriſtian Communion*, and ſo are guilty of *Superſtition*, as they ſay of us with reſpect to Kneeling.

But theſe are vain things; and not worthy to be regarded, ſave only that they are made uſe of to deceive the credulous and unwary.

The Lord grant that I may never ſin worſe, than by kneeling to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Lords Supper, and then I never need to fear, his diſpleaſure againſt me.

The Fourth thing is the *Surplice*, which I am next to conſider.

The *Surplice* is chiefly uſed for *Decency*; and *fine Linnen white and clean*, is called in the Scriptures, *the righteouſneſs of the Saints*, Rev. 19. 8. and puts us in mind of the Sanctity and Holineſs wherewith we ſhould be arayed, to make us amiable in the ſight of God; which Garment having thoſe qualifications that the Word of God doth require, *viz.* of *Lawfulneſs*, of *Edifying*, of *Decency*, &c, it ought to be uſed in the Service of God, being appointed by our Superiours.

Fifthly another great Objection, is *bowing at the Name of Jeſus, and towards the Eaſt.*

This by ſome is accounted Idolatry in a very high degree; though all affirm that God ought to be worſhipped according to his Word: yet ſome miſtaking his Word, will not have us to bow down before him, nor give him any bodily worſhip, tho' the Scripture commands us *to glorifie or worſhip God, with our Body, and with our Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *And thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*, Mat. 4. 10.

To worſhip God is an outward act of the Body, as well as an action of the Mind, to proſtrate, and bow before him; which is moſt fully required in the ſecond command, where it is ſaid in the Negative, concerning Images, *thou ſhalt not bow down to them nor worſhip them*; it is imply'd that we ought to *bow down to God, and worſhip him.*

It hath been the cuſtom of the Saints of old to bow down their heads, and to bow their knees, as in Neh. 8. 6. *And all the people bowed their heads, and worſhipped the Lord with their faces*

to

to the ground. And Dan. 6. 10. *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was ſigned, he went into his Houſe, and his windows being open in his chamber towards* Jeruſalem, *he kneeled upon his knees, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did afore time. David* he in a Heavenly Rapture, calls all the Saints to bow their bodies, and to kneel in Worſhipping God. *O come* (ſaith he) *let us worſhip, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker,* Pſal. 95. 6.

And this was St. *Pauls* practice, as he tells us in Eph. 3. 14. *For this cauſe I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom all the families in heaven and earth is named; whom God hath highly exalted and given a name above every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow,* Phil. 2. 10.

Which bowing may be taken in a literal, as well as metaphorical ſence; for though the Angels have no knees, and conſequently cannot bow them, (but being ſublime Spirits, are greatly to Reverence his Holy Name) yet ſuch as have knees, are moſt unworthy of Chriſt, if when they confeſs him to be their Lord and Saviour will not bow themſelves before him.

If they only bow their Hearts and Minds to God, at mentioning the Name of Jeſus; which they ſay they do; it is as much worſhipping a Creature, (a name) as if they bowed their whole Body; for in the Scripture the Idolatry of the Heart is called *Spiritual Whoredom.*

But one of the two they will grant is expreſly commanded in that Text; and being they grant one to be commanded, the other will naturally follow to be ſo, where God hath given it.

And concerning bowing towards the East, no man is required to do it, that thinks it is unlawful; and as for those that do it, we are to judge charitably of them; for God having commanded us to bow even our Bodies to him, why may we not bow towards the East? *the City of the living God?*

I have sworn by my self, (saith God) *the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return*: (O what great and solemn thing is this which God is about to say!) *unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear,* Isa. 45. 23.

And St. *Paul* puts the *Romans* in mind of this Precept, *Rom.* 14. 11. for it is written, *As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

Thus 'tis plain that bowing and worshipping God with our bodies, as well as hearts, is the express Will and Pleasure of the great God; and if the Saints of God, did use to worship him *towards the East*, and towards *Jerusalem* as is most certain; then why should any be so uncharitable in their censures, as to charge them with Idolatry.

However, to worship God with our Bodies by bowing, is certainly from all these places of Scripture a great Duty, and I doubt not but ought to be performed in the cases following.

1. When we do in a solemn manner go to make our Addresses to the great God. 'Tis well known that dissenters will bow their bodies to men, who are meer Creatures: how much more ought they to bow their bodies, when they present themselves before God, the Creator of all things, whom they are bound to worship, and none other.

2. We

2. We ought to bow when after Duty we go out of the preſence of God.

3, When we enter into the place where he hath promiſed to be preſent in a more peculiar manner; even the Church, or place where he is to be worſhipped.

4. We ought to bow when we confeſs, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and our only Saviour.

5. When we aſcribe Honour and Glory to the Bleſſed Trinity.

In theſe Caſes (at leaſt) I think we can do no leſs, (if we obey the Word) than to bow *before the Lord God, our Maker.*

Sixthly, The laſt thing to be conſidered, (that is any thing material) is the *Religious Obſervation of holy dayes; dayes of praiſe, and thanksgiving*; which are kept in memory of our bleſſed Saviour, and his Holy Apoſtles; to celebrate the praiſes of God, for their bleſſed Examples and precious Doctrine; and to ſtir us up to follow their examples in true Holineſs and Zeal for God, all the dayes of our lives.

Theſe were the great ends for which theſe days were appointed; and alſo that we might have continual fuel to maintain the Fire of our Devotion unto God, and matter to ſtir us up to vigour and diligence in this ſervice, and time, and leiſure for the ſame.

Hereby we have every year the whole ſcene of Chriſts Life, repreſented to us, even from his Conception, to his Aſcenſion into Glory: The conſideration of each paſſage whereof (by the Spirits Aſſiſtance) hath a moſt powerful influence

to transform the Soul into the very Image of Christ.

Against these Holy Dayes, I did never hear a word of sound Reason, and yet the great usefulness of them doth not recommend them to the strict Observation of most amongst us.

Thus I have run over all the chiefest Objections that have been used against me for Conforming, and have given my apprehensions of the same; which contributes much to justifie my leaving Mr. *Lobb*, and his Congregation, to cleave to the Religion, that is establish'd by Law amongst us.

And now what remaineth, but earnestly to beseech the God of Heaven to *continue his favours to me, and to exalt his great, and glorious name, for all his unspeakable Blessings.*

O Almighty, and everlasting God, the great Creator of Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all the Hosts of them; whose providence is over all thy Workes, insomuch that whatever befalls thy Creatures, is according to the Counsel of thy Heavenly Will, and the effect of thine Eternal Decree;

Out of a deep sence of thy Greatness and Holiness, I acknowledge my own vileness and unworthiness, of all the blessings thou heapest upon me.

O Lord, enable me, to walk worthy of thy Love, and not by ingratitude to forfeit thy Favours; but do thou continue thy Goodness, and Loving kindness to me, which is marvellous and astonishing.

Thou hast delivered me from every evil way, and by thy good Spirit hast led me into the way of Truth, according to thy promise.

When my soul was in adversity, and I knew not what to do, halting between two Opinions; then I cried

cried unto thee, and thou haſt delivered me, and ſet my feet upon a Rock.

O help me to perſevere in the way of thy commandments, and abound in all the graces of thy Holy Spirit; that all the World may ſay, this is the Lords own doing, a great work, which he hath performed and doth own, and bleſs.

O My Soul, rejoyce in the Lord, and ſpeak well of his name, make his praiſe glorious, praiſe him among the people; yea ſing praiſes to him among the Nations.

O Lord, thou art my God, and I will praiſe thee, for all thy wonderful goodneſs to me; yea thou art my God, and I will exalt thy name through Jeſus Chriſt for ever, even while I have a being.

Bleſſed be the Lord God of Hoſts, from everlaſting to everlaſting, Amen, *and* Amen.

A Prayer for Diſſenters.

O *Moſt Holy and Righteous Lord God, Thou art Glorious in Holineſs, Fearfull in Praiſes, doing Wonders; a God whoſe Compaſſions fail not, and whoſe Mercy endureth for ever; Do thou behold O Lord, viſit with thy Salvation, and deliver all ſuch as are ſincere and upright, from all the deceits of Sin and Satan.*

We are perſwaded thou haſt many a Precious Saint among the Diſſenters, who Conform not to the Lawful Commands of their Superiours, and that good Government which by thy Providence thou haſt eſtabliſhed amongſt us; and is the effect of their Credulity and Ignorance, and a very great ſin, as thou haſt diſcovered in thy moſt Holy Word. The good Lord convince them of it, and give them Repentance and Forgiveneſs.

As for thoſe among them who delight to bring an ill Report upon the Church of England (*this* Engliſh *Sion*) *and ſo diſhearten the People from her Communion; be graciouſly pleaſed (O Lord) to hold thy hand, and deſtroy them not together, as thou didſt the* Iſraelites *in the Wilderneſs, but ſave them, and bring*

bring them to Repentance, and a reſolution of rendring to thee, Univerſal Obedience; and ſuffer them not to perſiſt in their iniquity, till thy Juſtice do find them out.

There are ſome delight to continue, and increaſe our diviſions; and craftily find out ways to Hagger *the Faith of weak Chriſtians, to prevent their Conforming; But do thou, O Lord, turn the Counſels of thoſe* Achitophels *into Fooliſhneſs, and let us all be truly ſenſible of the deſigns of Hell and* Rome.

Their intent is to divide and ſeparate us, as much as may be, that [ſo] *they may deſtroy us; But do thou, O Lord, deliver us out of their hands, and let none of thy Saints be the Inſtruments in this Helliſh Conſpiracy.*

To this end make all Diſſenters *ſenſible, how far they gratifie the Papiſts by their diviſions, and render their wicked deſigns to be much more eaſily accompliſhed: Let them ſee thou abhorreſt all ſuch as put a helping hand to thoſe Plots that are of the Jeſuites contrivance, whether it be deſignedly, or through ignorance.*

It is the great buſineſs of the Papiſts to create ſtrife and enmity, between Friends and Brethren, and by putting on an extraordinary ſhew of Sanctity, and transforming themſelves into all ſhapes, do thereby deceive thy people, who are ſerviceable to them, at the ſame time, when they think they are a doing thee the greateſt Ser-

vice

vice imaginable; But do thou undeceive them in this matter, and help them to put on Charity, and lay aſide all prejudice, envying, Strife and diviſion; for thou haſt told us where theſe things are, there is confuſion and every evil work.

They know if the Enemy ſhould prevail, he will ſpare them no more than us; therefore let them not directly, nor indirectly, contribute any thing to facilitate the deſign of their, and our Enemies; which is to deſtroy us all together.

Neither let Jeſuitical Counſel ſo far prevail with them, as to make them conclude, that there is no other way to compoſe our differences, then by changing of thoſe lawful things, which have been ſo long obſerved among us, which if done, the Enemy will rejoyce, knowing that greater diviſions will follow thereupon: But let every one of them diligently walk according to thy Word, in true Love and Obedience to thee, in all Fidelity, and Loyalty to the King, and in real Love and Charity to all men; that ſo thou mayſt be glorified, our Enemies deſigns blaſted; our Lives, our Laws and Religion preſerved.

It is evident to them, as well as us, that Union alone will make us happy; O that thou wouldſt put it into their hearts to do all things that are lawful to obtain Union; and make them ſenſible of the lawfulneſs of thoſe things that are required.

Thou knoweſt (O Lord) that there is nothing required

required from them, but what tends to the decent worſhipping of thee, and to excite our diligence in thy Service, and thou commandeſt them to obey, and be ſubject; grant O Lord they may do ſo, and diſcharge a good Conſcience.

And do thou encline the hearts of our Governours, to favour them ſo far, as may conſiſt with the Nations Peace and Welfare.

And let all thoſe Fatherly chaſtiſements inflicted upon them (for the breach of thy Laws) be for their good, and ſuffer them not, O Lord, to fall by their iniquities; but in much mercy diſcover to them their ſin and errour, and cauſe them to return.

O Lord bleſs them with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things, and bring them all into the way of Truth, even the way of thy Commandements, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Glory, World without end, Amen.

A ſhort Appendix *to the foregoing Diſcourſe.*

SInce I writ the precedent Part, many ſtrange things have happened amongſt us, of which it is neceſſary to make ſome brief Obſervation, to prevent ſome objections that may ariſe, and fruſtrate the good ſucceſs, hoped for by publiſhing the ſame.

That Diſcourſe hath been (as it were) finiſhed, ever ſince *January* 168⅞ : Since which great ſeverities have been uſed againſt Diſſenters; They have been much diſturbed in their publick Aſſemblies, and not ſuffered to meet together as they uſed to do : Many have been excommunicated, Fined, and Impriſoned, and all in danger of Temporal Sufferings, upon which account many ſeem to have conformed to avoid the penalties of the Law.

2. There hath happened a damnable and wicked Plot, carried on by perſons diſaffected to the Government, for which ſeveral have received the juſt rewards of their moſt Helliſh deſigns; which hath greatly animated ſuch who halted between two Opinions, to greater love to the King, the Laws, and the Church, and to a greater diſlike of all ſorts of Diſſenters, their ways and practices.

Neither of which had any influence upon me, in my adhering to the Church; for that was a time when all was ſerene and calm, they did then take liberty to preach, and print whatever they pleaſed. In

In the year 1680, I had the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt the Church imaginable.

About the beginning of 1681, I began to be pricked with the ſence of my ſin in not conforming; and the 29th. of *May* was confirmed by the Biſhop of *London*: The remaining part of that year, I was diligent to examine the matters in Debate in order to a full reſolution, and before it expired, did throughly break off from holding communion in any of their Meetings or Aſſemblies.

In 1682, I met with great oppoſition from that Party, as I have in the Book fully diſcovered, which enduced me to be curious in taking notice of every particular paſſage, ſetting down ſuch things as I judged were material which in the end grew to a conſiderable Bulk, and when I had reduced them to ſome Method and Order, (which was effected that year) I was perſwaded to commit them to the Judgment and approbation of the Learned and Godly in Eccleſiaſtical Authority; which was accordingly done in 1683, where it lay dormant a conſiderable Seaſon; but at laſt awaked, and ſtept out into the World as here you ſee, during which time moſt of theſe ſtrange Revolutions have happened, to the Eternal Reproach and Shame of Diſſenters.

I have great cauſe, and am under a perpetual Obligation, to bleſs God for ſuch a ſeaſonable deliverance, for had I continued any longer in my Fooliſhneſs and Obſtinacy; God might have juſtly delivered me up to Satan and his Inſtruments, to be aſſaulted by them in theſe late Helliſh Machinations and Villainous Deſigns, under the pretence of oppoſing *Popery*, and ſerving God in a purer way.

By

By what I have done I enjoy Peace in my Conſcience, which is more unto me than all Worldly Treaſures and Riches, and having Food and Rayment, I deſire therewith to be content, and patiently to undergo the diſpleaſure of my Friends, who highly reſent theſe my Tranſactions; truſting to the Providence of God which is able to raiſe new, to ſupply that defect.

In ſhort, The whole work is the effect of that earneſt Love, and Zeal, I have for the Church, and Government which God hath eſtabliſhed in theſe Kingdoms, and hitherto preſerved, notwithſtanding the unwearied attempts of Papiſts and Diſſenters to overturn the ſame.

And that this Church, and this Government may flouriſh, and for ever be preſerved, and all her enemies deſignes blaſted, and perpetually confounded: Let all Loyal Hearts, all good Chriſtians, and ſound Proteſtants with me, ſay unfeignedly, *Amen, Amen, Amen.*

O God, thou haſt taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works, Pſal. 71. 17.

THE END.

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